Rhythm and intonation in free verse form : an assessment of the contributions of phonetics, focus-to-accent theory and literary history to the understanding of nonmetrical poetry, with readings in the work of William Carlos Williams, Allen Ginsberg and Ja

Rumsey, Lacy Martin

Lacy Martin Rumsey
King's College London

Rhythm & Intonation In Free Verse Form

An Assessment of the Contributions of Phonetics, Focus-to-Accent Theory and Literary History to the Understanding of Nonmetrical Poetry, with Readings in the Work of William Carlos Williams, Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac

Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the PhD degree of the University of London

July 2000

Abstract

The thesis seeks ways in which prosody may describe the sound of nonmetrical poetry in greater detail, and with a fuller and better range of notations, than is currently the case. It discusses the roles of rhythm, metre and intonation in the work of three poets, and considers their wider potential within nonmetrical verse form.

The thesis adopts a definition of nonmetricality that is based on Derek Attridge's model of poetic metre: nonmetrical poetry is poetry made up, in whole or in part, of language which a reader or listener does not experience as a sequence of beats and offbeats. It argues that scansions should adopt auditory-phonetic, rather than phonological categories, but that the pragmatic emphasis of Focus-to-Accent theory means that phonology may now be more suitable than has previously been the case as a means of linking texts to performances. Scansion should not try to insulate itself from performance variation, but should seek to account for it; resources proposed for this task include those of corpus linguistics and literary history. A discussion of rhythm considers both the different kinds of syllabic prominence, and the circumstances in which those prominences may be interpreted as beats. It is followed by a summary of recent work in intonation.

Three chapters apply these methods to poetry. The study of Williams considers the relationship of metre and nonmetre in *The Tempers* (1913); that of Ginsberg considers the roles that pitch accent and paratone may play in his poetry, with a concentration on *Cosmopolitan Greetings* (1994); that of Kerouac investigates the place of several intonational features, including tonal sequence, in *Mexico City Blues* (1959).

A conclusion considers the relationships between rhythm, intonation and poetic form in a nonmetrical context, and suggests future goals for prosodic research.

Contents

Acknowledgements

For help and encouragement during the writing of this thesis, I should like to thank:

Anne-Pascale Bruneau;

Philippa Rumsey, Gina Rumsey, Etta and Tom Bedford, Susan Adams, Dinah Campbell, Joanna Delaforce;

Rachel Alexander, Isabelle Alfandary, Katharine Anderson, Tom Ash, Andrew Ayers, Philip Carter, Daniel Falush, Dan Hillman, Stéphane Gresset, Cynthia Jaynes, Peter McCafferty, Sylvie Mikowski, Claire Nozières, Damon O'Connell, Meg Russell, Geoff Tait, Glenn Timmermans, André Topia, Kim Vowden.

I am particularly grateful to Tom, Glenn, Katharine and Peter, and, especially, Claire and Kim, who have been extraordinarily generous with hospitality and house-room. It is difficult to imagine how the thesis could have been researched and written without them. Katharine, Gina and Glenn have been kind and careful proof-readers.

My mother, Philippa Rumsey, has not been able to offer the encouragement and advice that I know that she would have wanted to, and which I should have found invaluable. I record love and gratitude to her, and to the memory of my father, Paul Rumsey.

At King's College, I should like to thank:

Clive Bush;

Alan Marshall, John Stokes, Shamoon Zamir;

Virginie Guichard, Jeff Hilson, Burhan Tufail, Angus Wrenn.

I should also like to thank the Humanities Research Board of the British Academy for their award of a three-year studentship during the writing of this thesis.

Note on References

Where a work discussed is available in more than one source, only one is cited in footnotes; fuller details are contained in the Bibliography. In other respects, references follow MHRA style.

Addresses on the World Wide Web are correct as at 30 June 2000.

Introduction

This is a study in nonmetrical prosody. It aims to describe the experience of reading some of the poems that are usually considered as free verse, and to work towards generalisations about poets, techniques and styles that may permit further discussion. It has a particular emphasis on poetic sound, which it seeks to describe through a variety of techniques, some of which have not previously been applied, and through discussions of three poets of contrasting prosodic styles.

Like any study in this area, it is confronted with problems of terminology. Its title uses *nonmetrical poetry* and *free verse* as synonyms, although the second is notoriously difficult to define, and the first is a new term, based on the existing *nonmetrical verse*. The history of these terms is closely linked to that of the forms that they describe, and a certain amount of unravelling of both is necessary before further discussion can begin.

1 DEFINING TERMS

It is difficult to date the first nonmetrical poetry in English, although the earliest example that is still read today is probably Christopher Smart's *Jubilate Agno* (1758-63). The form first gained a wide readership in the middle of the nineteenth century, with the publication of poems such as Matthew Arnold's 'The Strayed Reveller' (1849), and Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855). These works differed from previous departures from formal convention, such as the irregular or 'Pindaric' odes of Abraham Cowley, in their abandonment of the fundamental principle of English metre: the regularly patterned alternation of more and less prominent syllables.

This is a passage from 'The Strayed Reveller':

> Thou standest, smiling
> Down on me! Thy right arm
> Lean'd up against the column there,
> Props thy soft cheek![1]

In these lines, the distribution of more and less prominent syllables seems to fall into no regular sequence. The reader must distribute prominences on the basis of phonological and semantic criteria alone, with no sense of a pattern that must be complied with, or an underlying rhythmic form. In contrast, the reader of an irregular ode may be unable to predict how lines will be combined, nor how long they will be, but will always find the prominences within them falling into regular patterns of alternation. The abandonment of this principle is, within poetry, a dramatic formal shift.

However, it is not one that rapidly acquired a name. In part, this is to do with difficulties in the technical understanding of metre; the analysis just proposed derives from a prosodic model of the late twentieth century, which is still not fully integrated into much criticism and commentary.[2] Arnold himself referred to poems such as this as 'pindaric' - suggesting that he failed either to recognise or to accord importance to their formal novelty - and contemporary commentators did the same.[3] Where poems were recognised as nonmetrical, they were, for much of the nineteenth century, seen as exceptional cases, rather than as examples of a new formal category. Nineteenth-century discussions of Whitman's work carry the sense that he was, as Swinburne put it, 'an original and individual poet', but one who had 'none of the qualities of a founder' of a new poetic style.[4]

---

[1]Matthew Arnold, 'The Strayed Reveller', ll. 7-10, in *Matthew Arnold*, ed. by Miriam Allott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 10-18 (p. 10).
[2]It is described below.
[3]Unpublished diary entry re 'The Youth of Nature', Jan. 1852; quoted in Allott, p. 189. Contemporary commentators: noted in H.T. Kirby-Smith, *The Origins of Free Verse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), p. 120.
[4]Algernon Swinburne, *Under the Microscope* (London: D. White, 1872), p. 54.

The variety of terms used to describe Whitman's poetry - 'wild [...] "lengths"', 'irregular rhythmic prose', 'a hybrid' - reflect the absence of any consensus that new stylistic possibilities had been created, and a new term made necessary.[5]

The first such consensus occurred in France, in response to the wealth of formally innovative poetry published in the late 1880s.[6] French prosody is, of course, different to English; syllable count plays a proportionately more important role. However, the formal innovation of the style that became known as *vers libre* was in some senses comparable to that of Arnold and Whitman: by abandoning the regular placement of caesura, and rendering unpredictable the pronunciation of the 'mute' *e*, the internal structure of the line was similarly destabilised.[7] After the first publication of poetry written in *vers libre*, in 1886, an unprecedented number of poets took to writing in the form, while theorists ascribed to it qualities more widely attractive than the poetic nationalism expressed in Whitman's prefaces.[8] Gustave Kahn, the first such commentator, asserted both the opportunities which it afforded for musical and formal experiment, and its particular suitability to individual expression.[9] In an intellectual

---

[5]Unnamed critic in the *London Leader*, among reviews included by Whitman in the 1856 edition of *Leaves of Grass*; Gerard Manley Hopkins, letter to Robert Bridges, 18 October 1882. Both quoted in *Walt Whitman: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Francis Murphy (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), pp. 62, 100. Bliss Perry, *Walt Whitman: His Life and Work* (London: Constable, 1906), p. 96. Whitman himself referred to the 'loose and free metre' of his work (Perry, p. 87).

[6]Clive Scott, *Vers Libre: The Emergence of Free Verse in France 1886-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

[7]These factors distinguish *vers libre* from the *vers libres classiques* of earlier poets, which were also heterosyllabic; heterosyllabism distinguishes it from poetry composed in *vers libérés*, which are also internally unstable.

[8]Although not published until 1886, the poems that are arguably the earliest examples of *vers libre* - Rimbaud's 'Marine' and 'Mouvement' - had been written in the period 1872-73 (Scott, p. 63).

[9]Gustave Kahn, 'A M. Brunetière', *La Revue indépendante*, 26 (1888), 481-86 (p. 485); 'Préface sur le vers libre', *Premiers poèmes* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1897), pp. 3-38 (pp. 27-28). The article of 1888 does not use the term *vers libre*.

environment influenced by Bergson, Wagner, and Impressionist painting, it was easy to interpret such suggestions as harbingers of a new poetic style.[10]

The term *vers libre* spread widely. Its translation into English was complicated by the fact that the *vers* of *vers libre* means both *poetry* and *line*; one early account of the style referred carefully to the *free verses* of its French practitioners.[11] The genre-naming *free verse* did not appear until 1908; an early use was in T.E. Hulme's 'A Lecture on Modern Poetry', probably delivered in November of that year.[12] However, *vers libre* continued to be widely used, and with connotations that seem to have been slightly different to those associated with *free verse*. The French term was often preferred in contexts where poetry was considered in a technical, or pseudo-technical light; examples are *Poetry* magazine's first reference to Imagism, Ezra Pound's comments on rhythm, T.S. Eliot's 'Reflections on *Vers Libre*', and the prosodic analyses of Amy Lowell.[13] *Free verse*, on the other hand, became associated with writing in which polemic was more overt, and in which the term itself was assigned a polemical role. It was used by poets such as Hulme, Aldington and Lawrence to praise the expressive capabilities of the new forms; it was used by others, including William Carlos Williams, to condemn a perceived formlessness.[14]

---

[10]Scott, pp. 54-63.

[11]L.E. Kastner, *A History of French Versification* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), pp. 69-70; quoted in Kirby-Smith, p. 183.

[12]Date of first usage from *Webster's*; T.E. Hulme, 'A Lecture on Modern Poetry', in *The Collected Writings of T.E. Hulme*, ed. by Karen Csengeri (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 49-58 (p. 53).

[13]'Notes and Announcements', *Poetry*, 1 (1912), 64-65 (p. 64); Ezra Pound, 'The Tradition', *Poetry*, 3(1914), 137-41 (p. 140); T.S. Eliot, 'Reflections on *Vers Libre*', *New Statesman*, 3 March 1917, pp. 518-19; Amy Lowell, 'Vers Libre and Metrical Prose', *Poetry*, 3 (1914), 213-20, 'The Rhythms of Free Verse', *Dial*, 64 (Jan 17, 1918), 51-56. Despite the title of Lowell's second study, it employs 'vers libre' throughout.

[14]Hulme, 'A Lecture', p. 53; Richard Aldington, 'Free Verse in England', *Egoist*, 1 (1914), 351-52 (p. 351); D.H. Lawrence, 'Poetry of the Present', *New Poems* (New York: Huesch, 1920), pp. i-x; William Carlos Williams, 'America, Whitman, and the Art of Poetry', *Poetry Journal*, 8 (1917), 27-36.

Although the term *free verse* has become less heavily connoted in subsequent usage, its association with these debates, and the broader intellectual context on which they drew, remains. In consequence, it is a problematic tool to use as a basis for prosodic analysis. There have been many attempts to give *free verse* a technical definition, and it has been recognised that, owing to the variety of different styles to which the label has been applied, such a definition must be expressed in negative terms. Charles Hartman's influential *Free Verse: An Essay in Prosody* (1980), for example, suggests that '*the prosody of free verse is rhythmic organization by other than numerical modes*', and that *free* should be considered as synonymous with *nonmetrical*.[15] The *New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* notes, similarly, that free verse 'is distinguished from meter by the lack of a structuring grid based on counting of linguistic units and/or position of linguistic features'.[16] Such definitions make limited claims, and permit discussion to proceed on a firm analytical basis.[17] However, they have not been universally adopted, and the broader ambitions of the term *free verse* survive.

Two recent studies illustrate this. In a history of the form, H.T. Kirby-Smith makes the following statement:

> Free verse, to succeed as poetry, *must depart in a distinctive and recognizable way from one or more conventions that have in the past governed the organization of the poetic line, or the stanza taken as a whole.*[18]

---

[15]Charles O. Hartman, *Free Verse: An Essay on Prosody* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 24-5 (emphasis in original).

[16]Donald Wesling and Eniko Bollobas, 'Free Verse', in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. by Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 425-427 (p. 425). Encyclopedia hereafter cited as *New Princeton*.

[17]Eleanor Berry's recent call for prosody to investigate 'the multidimensional space of free verse', and to do so on the basis of five 'axes' of form, is suggestive of the kinds of exploration that such an approach permits: Eleanor Berry, 'The Free Verse Spectrum', *College English*, 59 (1997), 873-97.

[18]Kirby-Smith, pp. 10-11. Emphasis in original.

Although this is negative in expression, the opposition on which it draws incorporates a principle of aesthetic judgement, and is historical, rather than synchronic. Kirby-Smith's application of *free verse* to a given poem expresses his sense of its departure from prevailing compositional practice: Cowley's odes, for example, are classed as free verse 'because they are unpredictable and because they were a reaction against confining forms'.[19] No distinction is drawn between unpredictability within the line and within the stanza, and the term itself is not clearly defined. Within a different critical perspective, Marjorie Perloff's 'After Free Verse' begins by adopting Hartman's definition, but gradually assigns to free verse a series of characteristics that allow it to be characterised as a period style; Perloff postulates 'a free-verse culture that occupies a particular place in twentieth-century literary history'.[20] The value of these analyses is not in question here. However, they illustrate a continuing tendency to de-technicalise the term *free verse*, and to employ it as a means of collapsing together prosodic, aesthetic and historical analyses.

For its aptness to technical definition, and its relative lack of wider connotations, the term *nonmetrical*, suggested by Hartman, is preferable. The term has become particularly associated with the work of Derek Attridge, whose account of poetic metre, set out in *The Rhythms of English Poetry* (1982) and *Poetic Rhythm* (1995), is adopted in this thesis.[21] Attridge explains metre as an interaction between language and rhythmic response, with the more and less prominent syllables of poetry cueing,

---

[19]Kirby-Smith, p. 100.
[20]Marjorie Perloff, 'After Free Verse', in *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word*, ed. by Charles Bernstein (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 86-110 (p. 89).
[21]Derek Attridge, *The Rhythms of English Poetry* (London: Longman, 1982), hereafter cited as *REP*; *Poetic Rhythm: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). A fuller introduction to Attridge's work is included in Chapter 1.

sometimes indirectly, a series of strong rhythmic pulses, or *beats*, in the reader or listener's experience:

> We say that a stretch of language has beats when, on hearing it or reading it aloud, we sense an impulse to move at regularly occurring places - to bring down the hand, to nod the head, to tap the foot[22]

A reader or listener is likely to perceive beats when syllabic prominences occur at perceptually equivalent intervals, or fall into familiar patterns. They are not a property of poetry alone; sporadic sequences of beats will be experienced in listening to every utterance in English, since all speakers have a tendency towards temporal regularity in their accent distribution, and listeners have a tendency to infer rhythm from this regularity. The distinguishing factor of metrical poetry is the thoroughness and subtlety of the way in which these tendencies are exploited.

Attridge's account of metre suggests that the simplest definition of nonmetricality may be one expressed in terms of a partial absence of beats, or of their being patterned in different ways. However, although *REP* notes that nonmetrical verse does not use beats in the same way as metrical verse, no formal definition is offered, while *Poetic Rhythm* defines *nonmetrical verse* as synonymous with *free verse*, and the latter as 'all types of verse without a regular metrical form'.[23] For Attridge's model of metre to be used as a basis for discussion of nonmetre, further definitions are therefore required:

> *Metrical language is language written in such a way as to make possible the experience of beats.*
>
> *English meter depends on the perception of beats, and when beats are felt in a stretch of language, a meter is present.*[24]

---

[22]*Poetic Rhythm*, p. 9.
[23]*REP*, p. 317; *Poetic Rhythm*, pp. 221, 219.
[24]*Poetic Rhythm*, p. 9, p. 44.

These are not the only definitions of metre given by Attridge; indeed, both *Poetic Rhythm* and *REP* contain formulations which are more explicitly presented as such.[25] However, they are the simplest, with their simplicity ascribable to their limited scope. They describe *metrical language*, and make the presence of beats a sufficient reason to use that term. In contrast, where Attridge gives a formal definition of metre *per se*, he sets limits - albeit tentatively - on the kinds of pattern into which those beats must fall if they are to be considered metrical. In *REP*, for example, metrical patterns are those which are 'dependent on habits [of perception] acquired through familiarity with a particular tradition of verse'.[26] The double vocation of such a definition, which attempts to reconcile a cognitive phenomenon with a cultural, makes it very difficult to recast in negative form, as would be necessary for any derivation from it of a definition of nonmetricality.

In contrast, the simple equation of *metre* with *beats* is precise, and has only one variable. From it can be drawn a clear characterisation of nonmetre:

Working definitions:
Nonmetrical language is language in which beats are not experienced.
Nonmetrical poetry is poetry made up, in whole or in part, of nonmetrical language.

These definitions divide metre from nonmetre on the grounds of fundamental aspects of readers' and listeners' experience, and so rule out any early confusion of prosodic categories with historical. It is possible that the words 'in whole or in part' are too exclusive; a poem with only one

---

[25]*REP*, p. viii; *Poetic Rhythm*, p. 7.
[26]*REP*, p. viii.

nonmetrical passage may well be considered metrical by its readers. A more serious difficulty lies in the statement that beats 'are not experienced' in nonmetrical language. Some poetry is metrically ambiguous: read one way, beats will be perceived; read another, they will not. A more explicit definition of nonmetricality will need to take this fact into account; if not, the definitions will apply to performances better than to texts. Nonetheless, these definitions provide a good initial basis for discussion.

A final terminological question is that of the distinction between *poetry* and *verse*. Many commentators use the terms interchangeably, and there is certainly no reason to insist that *nonmetrical poetry*, the term adopted in this thesis, be preferred to *nonmetrical verse*. However, it may have advantages. *Poetry* can mean many things, but its irreducible element, if it has one, is pragmatic: poetry is what is presented as such by writer, publisher or enthusiast. In contrast, *verse* has a technical minimum, implying that the text in question has an unjustified right-hand margin. In most cases, nonmetrical poetry is indeed printed in verse, yet it need not be. From the point of view of poetic sound, there seems little reason to draw a distinction between versified texts, texts presented as prose poems, and texts whose visual layout on the page is multidirectional or discontinuous. To combine a technical term with a pragmatic one implies an approach that seeks to describe any text, however shaped or presented, to which the status of *poetry* has been accorded.

2 GOALS AND METHOD

The primary interest of this thesis is in the sound of nonmetrical poetry - with a particular focus on rhythm and intonation - and in the perceptual response to that sound. Of course, there already exists a body of work in this field, yet it is less substantial than might be expected: until the

appearance of G. Burns Cooper's *Mysterious Music: Rhythm and Free Verse* (1998), no monograph devoted to the sound of nonmetrical poetry had been published.[27] Furthermore, recent decades have seen significant advances in the understanding of many questions of language that are of particular relevance to nonmetrical poetry. Phonological models have been developed that are more sympathetic to the needs of nonmetrical prosodists, while other areas of linguistic and phonetic research have provided further useful insights; as noted, the model of metre developed by Derek Attridge permits discussion of nonmetricality to proceed on a a relatively firm analytical footing. One goal of this thesis is therefore to gather together this body of knowledge, and to examine the conditions under which it can be applied to nonmetrical poetry.

Sound-based approaches to nonmetrical form are no longer the only ones available, nor even those which dominate. Many commentators now concentrate on visual form, examining the role of lineation, the 'sight-stanza' and other shaping devices that influence the response to poetic texts.[28] Others have concentrated on informational aspects of poetry. The

---

[27]G. Burns Cooper, *Mysterious Music: Rhythm and Free Verse* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). Cooper's study is only partly concerned with rhythm as it is conceived of in this thesis, concentrating on morphology and syntax as well as on syllabic prominence. It also considers intonation, which it identifies in a poem on the basis of recorded authorial performance. *Mysterious Music* was seen late in the writing of this thesis; no use was made of it, and it will not be further referred to.

[28]Theories and accounts of visual form include Hulme, 'A Lecture'; John Hollander, 'The Poem in the Eye', *Shenandoah*, 23 (1972), 3-23; Eleanor Berry, 'Williams' Development of a New Prosodic Form - *Not* the "Variable Foot", but the "Sight-Stanza"', *William Carlos Williams Review*, 7 (1981), 21-30; Stephen Cushman, *William Carlos Williams and the Meanings of Measure* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Derek Attridge, 'Poetry Unbound? Observations on Free Verse', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 73 (1987), 353-74. The largest claims for visual form are made by Richard Bradford, *The Look of It: A Theory of Visual Form in English Poetry* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1993). Sceptical views are provided by Reuven Tsur, 'Picture Poems: Some Cognitive and Aesthetic Principles' (1997), <http://www.tau.ac.il/~tsurxx/Picture_Poem_abstract.html>, which describes differences between aural and visual perception; and less directly, by Amittai F. Aviram, *Telling Rhythm: Body and Meaning in Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), which finds the move away from poetic sound symptomatic of a reluctance to consider poetic form in other than semantic terms (e.g. pp. 35-36).

first of these was probably Gay Wilson Allen, whose *American Prosody* contains an account of Whitman's poetic form that remains influential, and that is based on the analysis of grammatical and semantic parallelisms.[29] More recently, Donald Wesling, whose *grammetric* approach examines the relationship of lineation and syntax, and Richard Cureton, whose *Rhythmic Phrasing in English Verse* (1992) relates the syntactic, phonological and semantic patterns of poetry to the organisational responses described by generative theories of music, have provided this approach with rich theoretical foundations.[30] The concentration on sound proposed in this thesis is not intended to suggest the abandonment of visual or informational approaches, nor to suggest that the poets here described in terms of rhythm and intonation could not also be usefully analysed from within these alternative perspectives. Rather, it seeks a method of describing poetic sound that is as easy and as accurate as current understanding permits, so that other approaches need not be appealed to before a poem's sonic resources have been explored.

Four of this thesis's seven chapters are devoted to consideration of how this might be achieved. In Chapter 1, existing approaches to nonmetrical sound are reviewed, and goals for further work described. In Chapter 2, work from linguistics and phonetics is explored. Areas of research are suggested that might provide the most suitable notations for use in scansion, while a variety of methods are proposed for overcoming the

---

[29]Gay Wilson Allen, *American Prosody* (New York: American Book Company, 1935), pp. 217-243.

[30]Donald Wesling, 'The Prosodies of Free Verse', in *The New Poetries: Poetic Form since Coleridge and Wordsworth* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1985), pp. 145-71, *The Scissors of Meter: Grammetrics and Reading* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); Richard Cureton, *Rhythmic Phrasing in English Verse* (London: Longman, 1992). A generally positive account of Cureton's approach, although with some reservations, is Derek Attridge, 'Beyond Metrics: Richard Cureton's *Rhythmic Phrasing in English Verse*', *Poetics Today*, 17 (1996), 9-27; more hostile is Tom Barney, 'A Response to Richard Cureton's *Rhythm and Verse Study*', *Language and Literature*, 4 (1995), 49-54.

theoretical problem evoked above: the difficulty, in describing rhythm and intonation, of establishing the link between text and performance. Discussion of metrical poetry sometimes claims that its scansions describe the structure of the poem, and not merely one among many possible interpretations; that of nonmetrical poetry, on the other hand, is likely to appeal to a grounding in subjective response. Consideration is therefore given to ways in which this opposition can be circumvented, so that an account can be given of the range of difference performances to which a poem may give rise. Chapters 3 and 4 describe a detailed set of tools - notations and techniques of performance prediction - through which these methods may be put into practice, with rhythm and intonation considered in turn.

The thesis's third section - Chapters 5-7 - provides extended readings of collections by three poets: William Carlos Williams, Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. The forms used in these collections are of different kinds. Williams's *The Tempers* contains many poems with the kind of ambiguous relationship to metre just described; Ginsberg's *Cosmopolitan Greetings* exploits a range of rhythmic resources, and may elicit a use of intonation to reflect discourse structure in ways that enhance poetic form; Kerouac's *Mexico City Blues* engages with the loose rhythms of conversation, while some poems suggest that tonal movement may be used as a constructive formal principle, creating unusual and satisfying patterns.

Finally, a conclusion examines whether the approach to nonmetrical poetry set out in this thesis has proved useful, and how the working definition of *nonmetrical poetry* may be refined. It also considers whether more general conclusions may be drawn about nonmetrical poetry: its form in performance, its form on the page, and the nature of the relationship between the two.

Part One:
Methods

Chapter 1
Directions in Nonmetrical Prosody

The author of a study published in 1968, Paul Ramsey, began by noting that 'free verse is, in fact, poems'; he went on to suggest ten different ways in which nonmetrical poetry might function, and no method of telling them apart.[1] Although this thesis seeks to improve on this situation, the basic truth of Ramsey's analysis must be recognised. Since both *nonmetrical poetry* and *free verse* are categories that are negatively defined, there is no reason to assume that poets who have been grouped together under these labels have the same formal goals, nor that readers perform them all in the same way; nor even that they have the same readers. Even if only forms based in sound are considered, the potential for diversity is considerable.

In this chapter, the three principal approaches to nonmetrical prosody are considered in turn: those which assimilate nonmetrical forms to those of metrical poetry; those which describe rhythms that are not those of metre; and those which posit a role for intonation. Although a certain amount of disagreement exists between proponents of the different approaches, the approaches themselves are not in competition; given the multifarious nature of the genre, all are needed.

1 METRICAL CRITICISM

The relationship between free verse and metrical verse is a rich and complex one, and has played a major part in twentieth-century discussions

---

[1]Paul Ramsey, 'Free Verse: Some Steps Toward Definition', *Studies in Philology*, 65 (1968), 98-108 (p. 98, pp. 100-101).

of the form. Analysis of this relationship continues to be influenced by T.S. Eliot's 'Reflections on *Vers Libre*' (1917).[2] Eliot's essay is principally concerned with criticism and evaluation, based on the suggestion that the most successful kinds of English poetry perform an 'unperceived evasion of monotony'. Its central assertion is that

> the ghost of some simple metre should lurk behind the arras in even the 'freest' verse; to advance menacingly as we doze, and withdraw as we rouse.[3]

The more analytical observations contained in Eliot's study - such as the famous statement that '[t]here is no escape from metre, only mastery' - may be weaker than they at first appear, and should probably be read in the light of the circumstances of the article's composition.[4] However, 'Reflections on *Vers Libre*' has inspired a long tradition of prosodic analysis, within which nonmetrical writing is said to function against the background of a metrical alternative; this alternative is alluded to by a rhythm that approximates metre, or is simply significant by its absence.

An example of this approach is a reading of Walt Whitman's 'When I Heard The Learn'd Astronomer' proposed by Paul Fussell, which can be quoted in full:

> [The poem] devotes seven lines to establishing a loose "sincere" quasi-prosaic grid as a field against which the remarkably regular final line of iambic pentameter emerges with special emphasis reinforcing the irony:
>
> When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
> When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
> When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and
> measure them,

---

[2]Subsequent references are to the essay as reprinted in *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. by Frank Kermode (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), pp. 31-36.

[3]'Reflections on *Vers Libre*', pp. 34-35.

[4]It was written at a period when, according to Ezra Pound, he and Eliot had judged that the fashion for free-verse composition had led to a 'general floppiness', and in consequence had committed themselves to composing in 'rhyme and regular strophes' (Ezra Pound, 'Harold Monro', *Criterion*, 11 (1932), 581-92 (p. 590)). Evidence from elsewhere in Eliot's article suggests that he uses 'metre' as a synonym for 'rhythm'.

> When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much
> applause in the lecture room,
> How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
> Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
> In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time

-and then the shock of regular iambic pentameter registering a different and more valid way of perceiving:

> Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

The poem might be taken to illustrate Roethke's view that "free verse is a denial in terms." One way of analyzing Whitman's poem as a rhythmical phenomenon is to suggest that the final line discloses the ghost meter which the poem has been concealing all along.[5]

Not all metrical responses to free verse are as explicitly polemical as this. Many critics apply the method to Eliot's own poetry, for example - a context in which it is not controversial - while Annie Finch's extended study of the field applies it in detailed readings of a series of poets.[6]

However, the metrical analysis of free verse has attracted a certain amount of hostility. One commentator, Alan Holder, has argued with particular force against what he calls the 'haunting' of free verse.[7] Discussing Fussell's analysis of Whitman, for example, he observes that l. 3, with 18 syllables and 'seven or eight stresses', does a particularly good job of concealing the ghostly pentameter.[8] He proposes a different starting-point for analysis:

> We need to take the 'free' in 'free verse' at face value, to accept it as real, and, while admitting the obvious fact that a serious poet is aware of the 'metrical'

---

[5]Paul Fussell, *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form*, revised edn (New York: Random House, 1979), pp. 84-85. The reference is to Theodore Roethke, 'Some Remarks on Rhythm', *Poetry*, 97 (1960), 35-46 (p. 43).

[6]Annie Finch, *The Ghost of Meter: Culture and Prosody in American Free Verse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993). Readings of Eliot include Harvey Gross, *Sound and Form in Modern Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), pp. 169-214; Hartman, *Free Verse*, pp. 123-29; Winifred Crombie, *Free Verse and Prose Style: An Operational Definition and Description* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 62-67. Accounts of Eliot by Derek Attridge and H.T. Kirby-Smith are discussed below.

[7]Alan Holder, *Rethinking Meter: A New Approach to the Verse Line* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1995), p.103.

[8]Holder, pp. 111-12.

> tradition, to hear, unconstrained by ghostly paradigms, how that poet exercises his freedom, using it to create ad hoc patterns. The 'sound' of the poem is the sum total of the sonic dimensions of those patterns, to be discovered by painstaking tracings [...] that cannot be subsumed under glib formulas.[9]

Some of the alternative methods of analysis which Holder proposes are discussed in subsequent sections; if only from the point of view of rhetoric, his work stands as a strong counterweight to the tradition represented by Eliot and Fussell.

It is clear that the application of a metrical paradigm to nonmetrical verse raises difficult questions. However, technical aspects are relatively little discussed, although it is at this level that discussion may be the most useful. These aspects are of two kinds: the critical concepts and tools available, and the method according to which they are to be applied. Questions of method remain very problematic, but advances in the understanding of metre have thrown up a set of descriptive concepts whose use can give convincing results. An account of these developments will permit a clearer discussion of the work which has been carried out in this field, and of the difficulties which remain to be addressed.

During the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, inherited metrical terminologies - the classical model of English metre, and the foot-based scansion associated with it - were tested against a wider variety of poetry, and in the light of a deeper understanding of both human rhythmic processing and English phonology, than had hitherto been the case. As noted in the Introduction, the work of Derek Attridge will be drawn on at several points within this thesis; *The Rhythms of English Poetry* (1982; hereafter *REP*) and *Poetic Rhythm* (1995) constitute a very different model of poetic metre to that which is implied by traditional scansion, and one which is suggestive of useful approaches to nonmetrical poetry.

---

[9]Holder, p. 128.

REP discusses the foot at an early stage, and finds it unhelpful. Attridge quotes Shakespeare's 'The Phoenix and the Turtle', and points to the impossibility of determining whether its metre is 'trochaic' or 'iambic': is the basic foot /x, with an extra final stress, or x/, with a missing initial one?

```
/   x /   x   /   x     /
Here the anthem doth commence:
/   x   /   x   /x   /
Love and constancy is dead [10]
```

A more serious difficulty is the inability of foot-based scansion to account for some of English poetry's most powerful forms. Attridge quotes Blake's 'The Chimney Sweeper', and suggests that the pattern of prominence within it is such that no basic foot could be found; despite this, the poem's rhythm is 'bold and strong'.[11] Finally, he suggests that even poetry written in the metre traditionally thought of as particularly suited to the classical approach - iambic pentameter - is relatively ill served by it. The classical model of formal meaning compares every line to the abstract template, and treats every deviation as a 'foot substitution'. Such an account does not, for Attridge, explain how the verse actually works. Quoting the opening lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet 29, he scans them according to classical techniques; this is l. 3:

```
|  x     /  |  x  /  |  /     x  |  x  /  |  x     /  |
|And troub  |le deaf  |heav'n with |my boot |less cries, |
```

The traditional explanation of the feeling of tension or disruption likely to accompany the third foot of this line is in terms of its deviation from the metrical template: as indicated by the double notation, a trochee (/ x) has

---

[10]Shakespeare, 'The Phoenix and the Turtle'; *REP*, p. 11.
[11]*REP*, p. 12.

been substituted for the expected iamb (x /). Attridge argues that such a schematisation has little to do with the way the line is actually experienced:

> The tension is experienced not between two simultaneously perceived levels, but in the linear progression of the line; the stress on 'deaf' is immediately followed by a further stress carrying the next beat, which slows down the movement over two words and creates a point of rhythmic emphasis; and this in turn is followed by two lightly pronounced nonstresses. The rhythm therefore undergoes a temporary deformation - a slowing down of the syllabic movement, followed by a compensatory speeding up [...] and the five beats of the line, instead of being evenly distributed among the ten syllables, are irregularly dispersed.[12]

Such examples suggest a disparity between the reality of rhythmic experience and the analytical capabilities of foot-based scansion.

Attridge's model of poetic metre makes a series of claims about the experience of rhythm, and seeks to link those claims, via an account of the traditional forms of English verse, to the reader's experience of individual poems. Drawing on musical and psychological theories of rhythm, Attridge notes that human rhythmic response prefers to organise perceptions into alternating patterns of stronger and weaker pulses, a preference which is most easily seen in our tendency to hear an alternating, 'tick-tock' rhythm in the ticking of a clock. He also notes that spoken English is characterised by a succession of more and less prominent - stressed and unstressed - syllables, and cites the claims made by Abercrombie and others for the 'stress-timed' nature of English.[13] Combining these perceptions, Attridge suggests that the stressed and unstressed syllables of English poetry be conceived of as a sequence of strong and weak stimuli, patterned in such a way that readers and listeners may infer from them an *underlying rhythm.* Stressed syllables will typically be perceived as strong rhythmic pulses, which Attridge calls *beats*, with unstressed syllables perceived as *offbeats* interspersed between

---

[12]*REP*, pp. 13-14.
[13]David Abercrombie, 'A Phonetician's View of Verse Structure', in *Studies in Phonetics and Linguistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 16-25 (p. 17).

them. Such a model of rhythm thus locates it within the experience of the reader or listener, rather than within the linguistic material presented to that reader or listener's perception.[14]

This model of poetic rhythm permits Attridge to propose a notation, and a set of descriptive procedures, that are attuned to both language and rhythm, but that - unlike foot-scansion - keep the two domains separate. Poems are scanned by aligning beats and offbeats - *B* and *o* respectively - with the syllables with which they are associated:

> But who hath seen her wave her hand?
> o B o B o B o B
> Or at the casement seen her stand?[15]
> o B o B o B o B

These lines exhibit an unusually exact correlation between stimulus and response, with every stressed syllable corresponding to a beat, and every unstressed syllable to an offbeat. In most verse, linguistic cues and underlying rhythm diverge to a significant extent. It is in describing these divergences that the *REP* model's separation of the two domains is most productive.

Much poetry in the ballad tradition, for example, alternates four-stress and three-stress lines. In the shorter lines, however, a fourth beat may continue to be experienced. *REP* describes this phenomenon in terms of 'unrealised' beats and offbeats, notated by being placed within brackets:

---

[14]Antecedents of this approach include Coventry Patmore's 'Essay on Metrical Law' (1857), the first text to argue that beats may be perceived in the absence of any physical stimulus (Mary Augustine Roth, *Coventry Patmore's 'Essay on English Metrical Law': A Critical Edition with a Commentary* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1961), pp. 3-50 (p. 15). Other twentieth-century prosodists to discuss the mental component of rhythm include Seymour Chatman, *A Theory of Meter* (The Hague: Mouton, 1965), pp. 18-29. The distinction between stimulus and response in musical rhythm is discussed by Grosvenor Cooper and Leonard B. Meyer, *The Rhythmic Structure of Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 3-8; a bibliography to 1980 can be found in Walther Dürr, Walter Gerstenberg and Jonathan Harvey, 'Rhythm', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie, 20 vols (London: Macmillan, 1980), XV, 804-24.

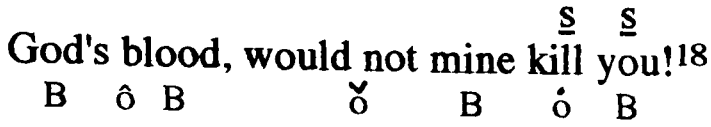
[15]Tennyson, 'The Lady of Shalott'; *REP*, p. 92.

And I had done a hellish thing,
o B o B o B o B
And it would work 'em woe:
o B o B o B [oB]
For all averred, I had killed the bird
o B o B ŏ B o B
That made the breeze to blow.
o B o B o B [oB]
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
ȯ B o B o B o B
That made the breeze to blow![16]
o B o B o B [oB]

At the end of every second line, the language stops, but the rhythm continues. As Patmore noted in 1857, the mind 'craves measure'; it will complete the realisation of an underlying four-beat rhythm even where immediate linguistic cues are lacking.[17] Also illustrated by these lines are other instances of divergence between linguistic cue and rhythmic response. These are the *double offbeat* in l. 3, notated by $\check{o}$, in which two unstressed syllables realise an offbeat, and the *demotion* ($\dot{o}$) which, at the beginning of l. 5, permits a stressed syllable to be associated with an offbeat. These symbols thus convey details both of the rhythmic response to Coleridge's lines, and - since any sign but a simple o or B denotes a departure from the basic correlation of beats with stresses, and offbeats with nonstress - of their phonology. In cases where an independent notation of phonology is required, Attridge does this with a series of marks above the line; these include *+s* for a stress, *-s* for a nonstress, and $\underline{s}$ for an emphatic stress. In discussing lines from Browning's 'Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister', for example, $\underline{s}$ is used to indicate where stresses are given particular rhetorical emphasis:

$\underline{s}$
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
o B ô B o B o B o

[16]Coleridge, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'; (adapted from) *REP*, p. 91.
[17]Patmore, p. 15.



The notation of the strong stresses allows Attridge to indicate that, while the underlying rhythm carries the movement of the line, local aspects of its phonetic realisation can contribute greatly to the poem's bilious charm.[19]

From the point of view of free-verse prosody, Attridge's work provides a considerable challenge. The availability of an account of poetic rhythm in English which directly links surface form to rhythmic response obviates the need for the schematisations of classical scansion, such as the foot. While Attridge's own notations are (of course) themselves schematisations, they have the advantage of being explicitly linked to the responses likely to be stimulated by metrical verse, identified as beats. This makes the unmotivated use of such notations in the response to nonmetrical verse extremely difficult, since to ascribe beats to a passage of nonmetrical verse is to make an unequivocal statement that a global rhythmic structure has been found within in. This is both a bigger claim than that implied by simply scanning for stressed syllables, since these are ubiquitous in English, and a more meaningful one, in that the rhythmic experience so described is likely to be central to possible experience of the line. The application of the beat-based model of metre to appropriate nonmetrical texts is therefore likely to be more challenging than the simple identification of metre with the notations of classical scansion, yet also more productive.

An illustration of the implications of Attridge's method for the analysis of nonmetrical poetry is provided by *REP*'s scansion of 'The Fire Sermon',

---

[18]Browning, 'Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister'; (adapted from) *REP*, p. 339.
[19]The scansion also illustrates another of the deviations of language from rhythm which the *REP* model describes: the *implied offbeat*, notated by *ô*, which occurs when an offbeat is felt between two adjacent stresses.

the third section of Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Attridge, like other prosodists before him, finds a ghost metre in these lines: a five-beat pattern in which 'regularity is just kept out of reach', and where:

> the lines establish associations with the tradition of English verse, but in an oblique or ironic way, neither committing the poem to that tradition, nor wholly challenging it.[20]

One of the advantages of the notation proposed by *The Rhythms of English Poetry* is that, in cases where metre is felt to be present only some of the time, the double-line scansion can convey the fact. Where rhythmic regularity is felt, the fact can be noted with beats in the lower line; where not, the likely stress pattern can be notated on the upper line. The combination of the two provides a close commentary on the way in which individual lines move in an out of metre, as here:

```
The river's tent is broken; the last fingers of leaf
  o  Bo    B   o   B   ŏ      B ôB     ŏ     B

                      -s -s   -s   +s   +s      -s   +s
Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind
  B     o    B

 +s  -s    -s   +s     +s    -s  +s
Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.
                                  o   B        ŏ    B  o
```

This form of scansion allows a precise indication of the point where the linguistic form is felt to become a stimulus insufficient to cause a beat to be perceived - the point where the scansion shifts from below to above the line - as well, of course, as that where the reverse occurs.

Such a judgement is, as Attridge concedes, 'highly subjective', yet an advantage of his method is that readers whose response to the lines differs can notate the fact using precisely the same tools, and debate is possible; a

---

[20]*REP*, p. 322.
[21]*REP*, pp. 322-23.

debate assisted and clarified by the clear separation of the linguistic and rhythmic aspects of the response to the lines. The comparison with a foot-based approach, such as that used in H.T. Kirby-Smith's *The Origins of Free Verse* (1996), is striking. Kirby-Smith's work provides a useful history of metrical experiment, but its prosodic analyses suffer from their reliance on a foot-based terminology. In the following extract, the opening lines of Eliot's 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' are discussed:

> My marking of the accents will not accord with everyone's reading of the poem, but will do for purposes of discussion. The poem opens firmly with a catalectic trochaic tetrameter, a meter that, when continued for several lines, often conveys a sense of resolve or even of visionary certainty.
>
> / * / * / * /
> Let us go then, you and I
>
> Metrical resolve vanishes with the second line, which retains some sense of a four-foot line but which includes three trisyllabic feet, if we use that nomenclature, two anapests followed by an amphimacer, concluding with an iamb, which has always been acceptable to the ear as a substitute foot in an anapestic line. In any event, there is a complete reversal of the rhythm of the first line.
>
> * * / * * / / * / * /
> When the evening is spread out against the sky
>
> Even if we choose to hear a stress on "When," which is a quite plausible variant of the proposed scansion, and interpret the line as a hexameter, it surely plays against the opening rhythm.[22]

Some of the questions raised by this reading have been dealt with above; in particular, the difficulty of relating abstract or arbitrary textual divisions of the texts to the rhythmic experience of the reader. What status is proposed for the amphimacer?[23] What makes l. 1 'catalectic trochaic', rather than 'acephalous iambic' - and, given this doubt, can the account of l. 2 as a 'reversal' of l. 1's rhythm, which is predicated on the assumption that l. 1 is 'falling' and thus trochaic, be justified? Even more problematic, however, is the obvious inflexibility of this model; while that of *REP* allows for

---

[22]Kirby-Smith, p. 199.
[23]A Greek foot of the form /x/. See Robert J. Getty, A. Thomas Cole and T.V.F. Brogan, 'Cretic', in *New Princeton*, p. 248.

debate and subjective response, Kirby-Smith's terminology requires the supporting assertion that the proposed scansion 'will do for purposes of discussion'. While the tools provided by the foot-based model are defective, then, they may also represent a flawed critical method.

This consideration leads back to the aspect of the metrical approach which was earlier identified as the most problematic: the question of the method which may appropriately bring the tools of metrical analysis into a fruitful relationship with the forms of a poetry which is largely, if imprecisely, defined by the absence of metre. Few readers would argue with Attridge's finding of a five-beat line in the Eliot passage, which, when read aloud, seems in every line to encourage such a response; indeed, this is the kind of poetry which illustrates the fluidity of the boundary between 'ghost metre' and metre *tout court*. In consequence, while the openness of Attridge's method to the element of subjective response is welcome, his reading operates within a paradigm whose applicability to the work in question is likely to command a wide consensus. However, much of the poetry commonly thought of as free verse has a much less clearly-established relationship to metre, and any attempt to apply metrical tools to these less familiar forms is likely to raise more difficult questions.

Such attempts have, nonetheless, been made. One example is the reading of Allen Ginsberg's 'Howl' proposed in Annie Finch's *The Ghost of Meter*. 'Howl' is a poem that is not usually thought of as metrical, and so Finch's reading is a considerable challenge:

> The first line of Ginsberg's "Howl" establishes traditional metrical connotations in an idealizing iambic pentameter that gives way in midline to a series of horrified dactyls: "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked." The line's prosodic subtext recalls the New Critical conviction that iambic pentameter is the worthiest meter for ratiocination. The line's opening embedded iambic pentameter evokes the rational metrical ideal of Pope and

> Johnson, while its remaining triple feet describe the anguished lives and spiritual vulnerability of Ginsberg's generation.[24]

It would be easy, in responding to this, to concentrate on Finch's tone and terminology alone; indeed, that is largely the strategy of Alan Holder, whose hostility to metrical readings was referred to earlier. For Holder, Finch is one of a long line of critics who use a metrical model with the aim of recuperating challenging free-verse forms into a pre-existing paradigm, and whose work damages the understanding of nonmetrical poetry.[25] This may well be thought a fair criticism, at least in part. However, a wholesale rejection of the metrical response to free verse will fail to take into account the fact that metre forms a significant part of many readers' trained responses to poetry, with deep roots in English phonology and speech behaviour. The methodological questions thrown up by an analysis such as Finch's are more complex than any polemical account can allow for.

Perhaps the most fundamental of these is that of the relationship between paradigm and analysis. This question was raised by Josef Taglicht in an early study of poetic intonation:

> Prosodists as a rule engage simultaneously in two activities which should be clearly distinguished. One is the choosing of an acceptable way (sometimes even, more ambitiously, the right way) of reciting a given poem or pattern of verse, and the other is the specifying of the metrical pattern underlying the sounds heard in the chosen rendering or in the set of renderings which are regarded as metrically equivalent [...] The two activities, though easily distinguishable in theory, are hard to separate in practice, since instinctive expectations of finding metrical patterns are among the factors that guide a reader in his choice of reading: though interpretation has logical priority, it is hardly ever quite independent of metrical preconceptions of some sort.[26]

---

[24]Finch, *The Ghost of Meter*, p. 131.

[25]Holder, pp. 117-20. Finch responded to Holder's criticisms in 'Limping Prosody: A Review of *Rethinking Meter: A New Approach to the Verse Line* by Alan Holder', *Versification: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Literary Prosody*, 2 (1998), <http//sizcol.u-shizuoka-ken.ac.jp/versif/CurrRevs.html>.

[26]Josef Taglicht, 'The Function of Intonation in English Verse', *Language and Style*, 4 (1971), 116-122 (p. 116).

Taglicht's comments are directed to metrical poetry, but seem particularly relevant to nonmetrical forms. Evidence for the presence of a particular pattern will typically be found in every line of a metrical poem, and in the many other poems which may resemble it; in nonmetrical verse, on the other hand, such a pattern is probably not present. In consequence, the presence or absence of a particular formal expectation is likely to prove a decisive influence on performance.

In the case of 'Howl', there is no doubt that the words 'I sáw the bést minds óf my génerátion' can be scanned as an iambic pentameter with extra-metrical eleventh syllable. It is also clear that they can be read in such a way that nothing resembling pentameter results: when I read 'Howl' aloud, for example, I most often do not place an accent on the word 'saw', performing the poem's opening something as follows:

> I saw the bést mínds of my génerátion destróyed by mádness [...]

Clearly, one way of accounting for these divergent performances is with reference to the different expectations which Finch and I bring to the text. However, such a turn from text to reader would be very unusual within the tradition of prosodic criticism, particularly that concerned with poetic metre, where it is often assumed that the object of scansion is an abstract pattern to which performance bears only an indirect relationship.[27] Finch's analysis thus points to a recurrent difficulty with prosodic descriptions of nonmetrical form, and one which affects more than just metrical responses: their failure to conform with the evidential standards of prosodic tradition. In a metrical poem, as Wimsatt and Beardsley famously stated, the metre

---

[27]Chatman, *A Theory of Meter*, pp. 103-4; *REP*, pp. 89-90.

'is always there'; in free verse, it is there, if at all, only sporadically, and an alternative reading can always be imagined.[28]

Attention to these difficulties is essential if those readers who, in reading poets less obviously metrical than Eliot, find that metre remains a useful descriptive tool, are to attract consensus for their scansions. It would also help debate about the *appropriateness* of a metrical response to free verse to move beyond polemic. Some of the questions raised here concern the possibilities of human speech and rhythmic cognition. What precisely does it mean - phonetically, phonologically, cognitively - to posit a relationship between a given poetic metre and a passage of nonmetrical verse? Others are closer to the preoccupations of literary theory, and concern the choices which critics may wish to make within those possibilities. How can difficulties such as those thrown up by Finch's analysis of 'Howl' be avoided? Can 'metrical expectation' be bracketed out of the analysis - and if so, should this be a goal? These are questions which have not received sustained discussion, yet which may bring insights to the analysis of nonmetrical verse; for, while a prosodic criticism that makes too early or unexamined a recourse to a metrical response risks limiting its ability to appreciate and describe the ways in which poetic form may operate outside metre, one which ignores or rejects metre out of hand is likely to be equally limited. Powerful tools are now available for the metrical analysis of nonmetrical poetry, but a theory which can underwrite such analyses, and which can help them to possess coherence as well as flexibility, remains extremely desirable.

---

[28]W.K. Wimsatt, Jr, and Monroe C. Beardsley, 'The Concept of Meter: An Exercise in Abstraction', *PMLA*, 74 (1959), 585-98 (p. 592). See Chapter 2, below.

2 RHYTHMIC CRITICISM

One of the best-known discussions of nonmetrical poetry is that contained in the paper given by Benjamin Hrushovski to the Indiana 'Style in Language' conference of 1958. The title of Hrushovski's paper was 'On Free Rhythms in Modern Poetry', which he explained as follows:

> By free rhythms I mean poems which (1) have no consistent metrical scheme, that is, in tonic syllabic poetry have a freedom from the prevalent, predetermined arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables; but (2) do have a poetic language organized so as to create impressions and fulfil functions of poetic rhythm.[29]

Hrushovski thus conceives of free-verse rhythm as lying in the organisation of linguistic material - stressed and unstressed syllables - in ways that suggest rhythm, but resemble none of the known metrical patterns. This suggestion recurs in discussions of free verse. That contained in Attridge's *Poetic Rhythm*, for example, includes separate chapters for 'metrical analysis' and 'rhythmic analysis', with the latter explained as follows:

> Rhythmic analysis examines the disposition of stressed and unstressed syllables when they do not produce a regular meter.[30]

Prosody handbooks such as Philip Hobsbaum's *Metre, Rhythm and Verse Form* (1996) also analyse free verse for what George Wright calls 'rhythms-without-metre'.[31] However, this remains a relatively minor prosodic mode.

Holder's *Rethinking Meter* provides rhythmic commentary on two nonmetrical poems, including Ezra Pound's 'In a Station of the Metro'.[32]

---

[29]Benjamin Hrushovski, 'On Free Rhythms in Modern Poetry; Preliminary Remarks toward a Critical Theory of Their Structures and Functions', in *Style in Language*, ed. by Thomas A. Sebeok ([Cambridge]: Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and New York: John Wiley, 1960), pp. 173-190 (p. 183).
[30]*Poetic Rhythm*, p. 181.
[31]Philip Hobsbaum, *Metre, Rhythm and Verse Form* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 106-113; George T. Wright, *Shakespeare's Metrical Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 12.
[32]Holder, p. 157.

He suggests that the blank space within that poem, as typeset on Pound's original instructions, should be taken as a cue to pause, and that the poem, in consequence, should be seen as a series of phrasal combinations of stressed and unstressed syllables, pausally separated:

> The apparítion of these fáces in the crówd:
> Pétals on a wét blác bóugh.
>
> [...] The first line can be regarded as offering us an array of shrinking phrases, containing five, four, and three syllables respectively. [...] Whatever it is we are looking at is melting away. Reinforcing the effect of insubstantiality is the fact that relatively few of the line's syllables are stressed. [...] The first phrase of the second line, a one-word, two-syllable affair - "Petals" - continues the pattern of phrasal shrinkage. At the same time it gives us its stress immediately, on the first syllable, as opposed to what might be called the deferred stresses of the first line's phrases. [...] In overall terms, the first line gives us but three stressed syllables out of a total of twelve, the second four out of seven. The distinct differences in the packagings of sound respectively offered to us by the two lines corresponds to our moving from what seems insubstantial or questionable in the initial line, to the visual solidity in the second. The evidence of our eyes is made to correspond to the evidence of our ears, so to speak.[33]

Holder's scepticism towards metre certainly influences this account. Nonetheless, such close attention to the possibilities of local pattern is suggestive.

Derek Attridge's rhythmic scansions are found in both *REP* and *Poetic Rhythm*. In the latter, Attridge analyses a single poem, D.H. Lawrence's 'Mountain Lion', and illustrates the ways in which the varied proportions of stressed and unstressed syllables within different lines influence the performance tempo adopted by the reader, with the slowing-down that is forced by series of successive stresses encouraging the reader to linger over the drama of the scene described.[34] At some points, he describes particular semantic effects; for example, where repeated patterns of prominences and nonprominences suggest that the discomfort evoked in the poem is shared by both of its main protagonists.[35]

---

[33]Holder, p. 183.
[34]*Poetic Rhythm*, pp. 177-180.
[35]*Poetic Rhythm*, p. 178.

A comparable description is given in *REP* of lines from Geoffrey Hill's *Mercian Hymns*.[36] The passage discussed begins and ends with lines approaching the regularity of metre, and Attridge notates them with beats; in between, there is a passage that is less regular, and to which beats cannot be assigned. This movement in and out of metre forms part of Attridge's account of the poem, which in this respect is comparable to the discussion of Eliot quoted in the previous section. In lines from which metre is absent, Attridge notes the different paces of movement, and the way in which, for example, a concentration of stresses gives a sense of grandeur to the items described by the associated syllables. Rhythm is here presented as a way of 'intensify[ing] the semantic dimension' of the poem.[37]

There are surprisingly few examples within prosody of a response to free verse that focuses, like these discussions, on rhythm, but without having recourse to metre.[38] It is worth inquiring why this should be so. Partly, this may be to do with disciplinary training and preferences. However, it is also likely that there are more profound difficulties, one of which seems to be that of describing the rhythms of a nonmetrical poem in a way that is detailed, and capable of being sustained over the length of a poem. This problem is suggested by the quoted examples: Attridge discusses fairly lengthy poems, but, with the exception of noting local semantic effects, only in general terms; Holder's discussion accounts in detail for a whole work, but an exceptionally short one. An account of the full rhythmic workings of a lengthy nonmetrical poem is very rare.

One reason for this may be that it is, quite simply, difficult to imagine what it might mean for a rhythm to operate at every point in a poem, yet remain nonmetrical. This is particularly the case within the *REP* model of

---

[36]*REP*, pp. 316-21.
[37]*REP*, p. 321.
[38]Hartman's *Free Verse* contains only one example of such an analysis (pp. 93-96).

metre, which has the potential to bring within the bounds of the metrical a whole field of poetry that other approaches might consider nonmetrical: since irregular patterns of stress can cue regular patterns of beats, poems which a stress-based account of metre would see as nonmetrical may nonetheless have a potential perceptual regularity. 'In a Station of the Metro' is just such a poem; scanned as an irregular series of stresses and nonstresses by Holder, Attridge presents it as having a dipodic structure of alternating weak and strong beats (*b* and *B*, respectively):

> The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
> o b oB o b o B o b o B
> Petals on a wet, black bough.[39]
> B o b o B ô b ô B

Likewise, whereas Donald Wesling includes Tony Harrison's 'Isla de la Juventud' in a study of free verse, a beat-based reading can describe the poem's recurring two-beats-per-line pattern:

> The fireflies that women
> B B
> once fattened on sugar
> B B
> and wore in their hair
> B B
> or under the see-through
> B B
> parts of their blouses
> B B
> in Cuba's *Oriente*,
> B B
> here seem to carry
> B B
> through the beam where they cluster
> B B
> a brief phosphorescence
> B B
> from each stiff corpse [...][40]
> B B

---

[39] *REP*, p. 121.
[40] (Adapted from) Wesling, *The New Poetries*, p. 164.

The difference between these approaches raises, certainly, the questions of performance discussed in the previous section; it is not clear whether Attridge and Holder perform Pound in the same way, nor that Wesling would recognise his reading of Harrison in the beat-based notation. It also raises, very precisely, the question of the boundary of definition between the metrical and the nonmetrical. However, these are problems of theory; the effect on criticism is to cause apparently irregular rhythms to be assimilated to modes of description that are in no way distinctive from those applied to clearly metrical works.

A second difficulty facing rhythmic criticism may be the lack of an appropriate technical vocabulary for the many poems which are not amenable to a beat-based reading. If rhythm is now commonly held to be a mental phenomenon, its relationship to the phonetic surface of language is, in metrical poetry, indirect: as Attridge and others have argued, it is not one of identity, but one of cause and effect.[41] As the succession of more and less prominent syllables in a line of spoken English verse are perceived by a listener, he or she synthesises them, if possible, into a rhythmic series of beats and offbeats. In T.V.F. Brogan's words, metre operates as a 'binary code', which:

> functions by reducing the multiple degrees of prominence in the language to one opposition, on-off, yes-no, 1-0, marked-unmarked.[42]

Although the phonetic stimuli are necessary causative factors in this process, and although the detail of their particular qualities may well be perceived and appreciated by the listener - as in Attridge's reading of Browning, quoted above - in the reading of metrical poetry this detail is not

---

[41] *REP*, pp. 77-79; Cureton, *Rhythmic Phrasing*, pp. 98-106, p. 121, pp. 128-36. See also Clive Scott, 'Rhythm', in *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, ed. by R.E. Asher, 10 vols (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1994), VII, 3575-77.
[42] T.V.F. Brogan, 'Meter', in *New Princeton*, pp. 768-783 (p. 774).

by itself constructive of the listener's rhythmic response. For such a response to be elicited, it is sufficient that the stimuli - the syllables - display sufficient contrast and repetitiveness for the listener to interpret them as a binary sequence such as Brogan describes; metrical expectation will do the rest.

However, when a different kind of rhythmic experience is looked for - when sequences of syllables are felt to produce patterns that are *not* amenable to a synthesising cognitive response - the importance of the surface structure of language reasserts itself. It may be the case, for example, that the different phonetic realisations of different points of linguistic prominence within a spoken text grow in significance where metre is absent, and have a material effect on the response to and appreciation of a poem. If this is true, then the attention to phonetic structure is insufficiently strong in either the metrical or the free-verse traditions for an accurate account to be given of such subtle effects. Both Hartman and Holder make use of just two symbols, signifying 'stressed' and 'unstressed'; the scansions in *Poetic Rhythm* make use of a further sign to denote a syllable 'with secondary or subordinate stress'. Such a range of symbols, and the concepts which underlie them, may be sufficient to describe the rhythmic effects of free verse, or at least those effects which are regularly elicited in performance by a given text. Nevertheless, as with theories of metre, work in phonetics and phonology over recent decades suggests that the contrary is at least conceivable.

This suggestion is not a new one; Attridge, for example, comments in his discussion of Geoffrey Hill that:

> (Strictly speaking, the stress contour of a nonmetrical sequence like this should be shown according to a detailed phonological system, not in the simplified pattern we have been using for regular verse.)[43]

---

[43]*REP*, p. 319.

Some writers on free verse have attempted to provide exactly such a level of detail. Marjorie Perloff is one who has sought a more refined technical vocabulary than that of the metrical tradition. Her analyses of a whole series of free-verse poets make use of the same linguistic model as the structural metrists, known as 'Trager-Smith phonology' after the two linguists who designed it.[44] This is a phonology which seeks to notate four degrees of stress, using the symbols ´ for a primary stress (the strongest), ^ for a secondary, and ` for a tertiary, and leaving unstressed syllables unmarked. Perloff's recent scansion of a stanza from Robert Lowell's 'The Mouth of the Hudson' makes use of all of these:

> Acróss the ríver,
> lédges òf subúrban fáctoriès tán —›
> in the súlphûr-yéllow sún —›
> of the únfôrgívable lándscâpe.[45]

The arrow here denotes a run-on line.

Perloff's analyses aim at a greater degree of precision than those attempted by many other critics, and one of their major virtues is that they oblige the critic to make the detail of her performances available to all. However, they are dependent on the phonology on which they rest; and for all that Perloff describes the Trager-Smith phonology as 'standard', it is probably fair to say that it has not had that status since the early 1960s.[46] In particular, the notion that 'stress', or syllabic prominence, is a matter of degrees of loudness - the basis of the Trager-Smith model, and thereby of Perloff's scansions - has been long discredited; contemporary accounts emphasise the role of pitch, and to a lesser extent duration, and provide an

---

[44]George L. Trager and Henry Lee Smith, Jr, *An Outline of English Structure*, Studies in Linguistics: Occasional Papers 3 (Norman: Battenberg Press, 1951; repr. Washington: American Council of Learned Societies, 1957).
[45]Perloff, 'After Free Verse', p. 93.
[46]Perloff, 'After Free Verse', p. 109. See Chapter 2, below.

extremely rich model of the rhythmic resources available within spoken English. They also provide for a linking of phonetic surface to semantics in a way that the Trager-Smith model does not, and may thereby encourage scansions that are of greater interpretative value; indeed, their very attention to phonetics in itself constitutes a notable distinction from the exclusive concern of many previous commentators with phonology. On the other hand, to apply these contemporary model within prosodic criticism is, of course, to risk precisely the eventual descent into obsolescence symbolised by Trager-Smith scansion.[47]

Recent developments in phonetics and phonology have been incorporated into free-verse criticism to only a minor extent. Both Attridge and Richard Cureton are certainly aware of them, but their main interest lies elsewhere; other commentators, including Holder, are content to rely on a simple, binary model of stressed and unstressed syllables. A renewed attention to the understanding of syllabic prominence found in contemporary phonetic and linguistic theory may constitute, therefore, an important goal for free-verse criticism; other goals may include the connecting of rhythmic prosody to a theory of poetic form that can accommodate both micropoetic and macropoetic effects.

3 INTONATIONAL CRITICISM

While metre and rhythm are familiar concepts within prosody, use is less widely made of intonation. A general definition of the term will state that it refers simply to the role of pitch or frequency in speech, but most commentators restrict their attention to those pitch changes which perform a specifically linguistic function. The definition of 'linguistic function' is,

---

[47]Brogan, 'Meter', p. 1778, comments on the high turnover in linguistic theories during the 1970s and 1980s, and the fate of the prosodists who embraced them.

of course, not an easy one in any area, and intonation stands in a particularly complex relationship to language use. The comments of the phonetician Alan Cruttenden are revealing in this respect:

> Intonation involves the occurrence of recurring pitch patterns, each of which is used with a set of relatively consistent meanings, either on single words or on groups of varying length.[48]

This is a suggestively broad definition, especially since Cruttenden provides no other. In practice, studies of intonation have tended to focus on those pitch patterns which accompany certain kinds of statements, grammatical structures, or emotional states, and which can be described in terms of resemblance to an abstract pattern. Such a restriction may exclude certain aspects of pitch-use which are undoubtedly important to poetry, but serve mainly to characterise a particular delivery style: the performance notes placed by Vachel Lindsay in the margins of poems such as 'The Congo' - 'Solemnly chanted', 'shrilly' and even 'All the "o" sounds very golden' - indicate pitch phenomena of a kind with which intonologists and prosodists alike are not primarily concerned.[49] The bulk of commentary within intonology instead considers speech as a series of abstract 'tunes', which can be described in terms of qualities such as the direction or extent of the movements involved; prosodic discussion has considered whether such 'tunes' may constitute the building-blocks of a kind of poetic form.

The study of intonation dates back a long way, with John Hart's discussion of English orthography, written in 1551, usually taken to contain the first reference to the characteristic 'tunes' of English.[50] Some

---

[48]Alan Cruttenden, *Intonation*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 7.

[49]Vachel Lindsay, *Selected Poems*, ed. by Hazelton Spencer (New York: Macmillan, 1931), pp. 183-4.

[50]Historical surveys of studies in intonation are included in Kenneth L. Pike, *The Intonation of American English* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1945), pp. 3-11, and David Crystal, *Prosodic Systems and Intonation in English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), Ch. 1.

of these early linguists considered the role of pitch in poetry; Joshua Steele, for example, notated a reading of lines from *Paradise Lost.*[51] The technology was not available, however, to support Steele's claims that 'pitch glides' were central to English speech.

New technological possibilities - in particular the phonograph, used in Daniel Jones's *Intonation Curves* (1909) - gave rise to the first concerted attempt to demonstrate the importance of intonation to poetic form.[52] The so-called 'acoustic metrists' in England and Germany were at the forefront of this. One of the most prominent was E.W. Scripture, also a phonetician; a good example of the kind of work done is the case made by him, in 1923, for the presence of 'tone-rime' in a reading of the opening lines of Herrick's 'Upon His Departure Hence':

> Thus I
> Pass by
> And die
> As one
> Unknown
> And gone[53]

Scripture found that lines 1,2, 4 and 5 were read with a rising 'melody', while lines 3 and 6 were read with a fall. He noted that the distribution of these pitch patterns did not follow the rhyme scheme, and suggested:

> Have we not here an indication of a tone-rime, or a rime of pitch? [...] It would be interesting to inquire if such pitch-rimes are common in English.[54]

At much the same time, the formal potential of the rise-fall distinction was also being investigated by poets. In poems included in the Russian

---

[51]Joshua Steele, *An Essay Towards Establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech* (London: J. Almon, 1775; repr. Menston, Yorkshire: The Scolar Press, 1969), pp. 74-75.
[52]Daniel Jones, *Intonation Curves* (Berlin: Teubner, 1909).
[53]E.W. Scripture, 'The Study of English Speech by New Methods of Phonetic Investigation', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 10 (1921-23), 271-299 (pp. 290-92). The modernised spelling is Scripture's.
[54]Scripture, p. 292.

constructivist anthology *Gosplan literatury* ('State Plan for Literature', 1925), Selvinskij, Agapov and others made use of special diacritical signs to convey the two kinds of pitch movement.[55]

Such an approach to prosody - and, indeed, such poetry - has never gained widespread acceptance. One reason is likely to be the relatively minor role of intonation compared to metre in metrical poetry; looking at Herrick's poem, the claims made by Scripture are persuasive, but are less central to an explanation of the poem's power than would be an account of its metre. Another reason is a lack of consensus over the best way to describe intonation. While British approaches followed Jones in using contours, Americans for a long time sought to describe intonation, like stress, in terms of numbered levels; even today the divide persists.[56] The use of levels makes it quite hard to consider the abstract resemblances between different intonational phenomena - does 2-3-1 play the same role as 3-4-1? - and, in addition, looks quite intimidating to the nonspecialist. In comparison, the alternative, contour-based description - a fall, optionally described as 'high' or 'mid' - is much simpler to grasp. The linguists who have most influenced metrists have undoubtedly been American, and thus levels-based, a fact which may explain metrists' relative avoidance of intonation .[57] A third reason is more fundamental, and derives from the relatively loose relationship between any given sentence or text, and the intonational characteristics of its performance. It is clear, for example,

---

[55]See Edward Mozeko, 'Russian Literary Constructivism: Towards a Theory of Poetic Language', *Canadian Contributions to the VIII Annual Congress of Slavists* (Ottawa: Canadian Association of Slavists, 1978), pp. 61-70.

[56]Apart from Jones, the founding texts of British intonology are Harold Palmer, *English Intonation* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1922) and Lilias E. Armstrong and Ida C. Ward, *Handbook of English Intonation* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1926); the American equivalents include Pike, and Trager and Smith.

[57]A survey can be found in David Crystal, 'Intonation and Metrical Theory', in *The English Tone of Voice: Essays in Intonation, Prosody and Paralanguage* (London: Edward Arnold, 1975), pp. 105-124 (pp. 105-110). An exception among 1960s metrists was Seymour Chatman, who in *A Theory of Meter*, pp. 56-76, draws on the contours-based approach of Dwight Bolinger.

that, although the performance of Herrick described by Scripture is quite persuasive, readers are not obliged to adopt it; speakers have considerable freedom in their use of pitch. This has led both prosodists and linguists to consider intonation a phenomenon of secondary importance.

It had become proverbial by the late 1960s to consider intonation as 'the Cinderella of the linguistic sciences', and it is therefore unsurprising that it does not appear on Ramsey's list as a formal possibility for free verse.[58] However, in the years since then, things have changed. The widening appreciation of free verse has caused an interest in the possible contribution of intonation to its formal operation. Such a contribution had first been proposed during the 1930s, in a study by Jan Mukarovsky and in lectures by Roman Jakobson, but had never been properly tested.[59] At the same time, the arguments of some linguists that intonational phenomena might be more central to language than had previously been thought began to be accepted. David Crystal, within the British tradition, and in the United States Dwight Bolinger, have been particularly important in this respect; it is perhaps significant that Crystal, like Kenneth Pike before him, had a strong interest in poetry.[60] This combination of circumstances has not caused a groundswell of intonational studies within prosodic criticism, but it has provoked some activity. While no study has concentrated exclusively on free verse, several have cast light on how intonation may function within it.

---

[58]Alan Sharpe, 'Falling-Rising Intonation Patterns in English', *Phonetica*, 2 (1958), 127-52 (p. 151); quoted in Crystal, *Prosodic Systems*, p. vii.

[59]J. Mukarovsky, 'Intonation comme facteur de rythme poétique', *Archives néerlandaises de phonétique expérimentale*, 8-9 (1933), 153-165; Roman Jakobson, 'The Dominant', trans. by Herbert Eagle, in *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, ed. by Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971), pp. 82-87 (first delivered as part of a lecture course in 1935). These studies prompted Antony Easthope to suggest that free verse be renamed *intonational metre* (*Poetry as Discourse* (London: Methuen, 1983), p. 153).

[60]E.g. Crystal, *Prosodic Systems*; Dwight Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts: Melody in Spoken English* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986).

The studies fall into two categories. On the one hand, writers have taken phenomena already identified as important to poetic form, and investigated intonation's role within them. One recurring point of interest is the line, and how pitch may be used to mark its end; the potential importance of this to free verse is emphasised by the numerous modern studies that assert the dominant role played by line in free-verse form.[61] The association of linebreak with pitch change had, indeed, been the subject of the study by Mukarovsky referred to above. Mukarovsky pointed to the apparent formal coherence that poems in *vers libre* might display despite the absence of metre - a coherence which was notable in poetries, such as French and German, which had very different phonological bases - and argued that its cause was the presence of 'une formule mélodique très marquée à la fin de chaque vers'.[62] This 'melodic formula' was sufficient to create a rhythmic structure. Modern studies have confirmed that, in English-language poetry at least, linebreak is indeed typically accompanied by such a formula, which may be described as a low fall, but that its presence seems to depend more on syntax or punctuation than on linebreak itself; this may have interesting consequences for the performance of heavily-enjambed poetry.[63] Other studies have reconsidered the phenomenon of stress from the point of view of pitch. Instrumental studies of the 1950s had suggested that pitch, not loudness, was the predominant cue to syllabic prominence or 'stress', and as this view gradually became accepted within phonology, its applicability to poetry was demonstrated by studies carried out by David Crystal and others.

---

[61]An early and influential study of the line is B. Tomachevski, 'Sur le vers', in *Théorie de la littérature: textes des formalistes russes*, trans. and ed. by Tzvetan Todorov (Paris: Seuil, 1965), pp. 154-169 (first Russian pub. 1922-29). Statements by contemporary nonmetrical poets are cited in Chapter 4.

[62]Mukarovsky, p. 155.

[63]See Chapter 4, below.

However, linebreak and prominence are phenomena long known to be important within poetry. While instrumental studies can bring phonetic precision to their use, such precision is unlikely to help account for poetry which could not already have been described in such terms. An alternative approach, therefore, reverses the direction of analysis; instead of seeking the intonational correlates of existing prosodic concepts, it applies the tools thrown up by recent intonology to nonmetrical poetry, as performed or intuited by the critic, in order to see if these new tools may have prosodic importance. Such an approach has an obvious appeal in criticism of free verse, where points of consensus as to form are rare.

The first substantial study to adopt this approach was Eleanor Berry's 1989 examination of William Carlos Williams's late poetry, and in particular the triadic, 'step-down' lines of works such as 'Asphodel, That Greeny Flower' (1955).[64] Berry draws on the work of David Crystal, and on Alan Cruttenden's then recently-published textbook on intonation, the first of its kind, to support her intuition that the divisions in Williams's lines may be intended to correspond to intonation units - an intonation unit being that subsection of speech which includes an independent pitch movement and one or more accented syllables, and which is often delimited by pause.[65] For Berry, the reader is intended to perform the poetry according to this one-unit-per-step norm, which constitutes a base upon which Williams constructs expressive variations:

> Very successful in this respect is the concluding passage of "Shadows":
>
> Which leaves only the beasts and trees,
> crystals
> with their refractive surfaces
> and rotting things
> to stir our wonder.

---

[64]Eleanor Berry, 'William Carlos Williams' Triadic-Line Verse: An Analysis Of Its Prosody', *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 35 (1989), 364-388.
[65]Cruttenden, pp. 29-34.

Save for the little
central hole
of the eye itself
into which
we dare not stare too hard
or we are lost.
The instant
trivial as it is
is all we have
unless–unless
things the imagination feeds upon,
the scent of the rose,
startle us anew.

The quicker and lower movement of longer and shorter steps gives variation in pacing; the contrast of the first and second steps of the first triadic line quoted is especially strong. In addition, deviation from the norm of alignment of intonational divisions with lineation highlights each of the two qualifications ("Save for..." and "unless...") in the passage. A line-division intervenes between one premodifying adjective and a second, splitting "Save for the little/central hole" between the last step of one triad and the first step of the next, thereby throwing emphasis on the deferred element ("central hole") and the striking image it gives of the pupil of the eye. Later, the final step of the penultimate triadic line stammers, "unless–unless", to be followed by a long normal step; the swift, smooth flow of the latter comes as a release after blockage. The form functions expressively to suggest the movement of the speaker's mind, groping for, and finally finding, a solution.[66]

Such an appeal to tone unit in the analysis of free verse constitutes a genuinely new development.

Another way in which contemporary work in intonation is applied to the study of nonmetrical poetry is via the concept of *intonation contour*. The idea that lines of verse have a distinctive 'tune' is not a new one, as the example of E.W. Scripture shows. However, the first attempt to describe the role of contours in free verse is probably that included in Alan Holder's *Rethinking Meter*. In analyses of both metrical and nonmetrical poetry, Holder follows the descriptive model proposed by Dwight Bolinger, which holds that intonational contours are constructed through the combination of three basic shapes. One of his concerns is to show how intonation may be used to expressive effect. This, for example, is part of his analysis of Robert Frost's sonnet 'Acquainted with the Night':

---

[66]Berry, 'William Carlos Williams' Triadic-Line Verse', pp. 375-6.

Let us reconsider line 2:

I have walked out in rain and back in rain.

Applying Bolinger's format, I would diagram the line as follows:

out in rain

and

I have walked .

back in rain

That is, there is a rise on "out" and a fall on "back," the line thereby assuming a pronounced B + C pattern, with "and" functioning as a kind of bridge [...] A similar pattern, though realized over shorter stretches of syllables, shows up in line 13, which may be said to negate alternatives in the act of naming them:

wrong nor

proclaimed the time was neither

right

The "routine" or "repetitive" quality assigned by Bolinger to the B+C contour [...] can be said to apply nicely in the first of these lines - "I have walked out in rain and back in rain." The suggestion of the words is that the activity in question has been performed more than once or that, at the very least, it has brought no looked-for change. The depressed quality of this line is matched by its pitch-pattern cousin, line 13 [...] "Right" in that line is heightened by a lowering, thereby reinforcing the sense that the notion of appropriate timing is unavailable. To sum up, pitch movement is utilized here to suggest that whether one goes "up" or "down" there is no escape from the malaise depicted, just as there is no relief in walking out or walking back.[67]

One of the two nonmetrical poems discussed by Holder is Sylvia Plath's 'Ariel'. In this poem, he notes the presence of more abstract resemblances from line to line, as in the following lines:

And now I
Foam to wheat, a glitter of seas.
The child's cry

Melts in the wall.

---

[67]Holder, p. 218.

Holder notes the recurrence of "B" profiles - that is, of a rising contour - immediately before the two run-on lines in this passage:

> And now I
>
> [...]
>
> The child's cry

He suggests that these profiles are both induced by and reinforcing of the poem's prominent use of enjambment, and serve to charge the passage with energy.

The turn to intonation group and intonation contour opens up new possibilities for the description of free verse. Such descriptions will probably be most useful when they can demonstrate that the consideration of intonation adds significant new material to the account of a poem's form. In Holder's analysis of Frost, it is unclear how awareness of intonation's expressive potential significantly adds to understanding; indeed, there is a danger of circularity in assertions that a particular intonation contour reinforces a particular interpretation, since it is presumably on the basis of that interpretation that the contour has been assigned in the first place.[68] On the other hand, Holder's account of 'Ariel', in its suggestion of a way in which enjambment may function aurally, and how enjambed lines which are separated on the page may nonetheless be connected by the repetition of a particular contour, provides an insight which an analysis of the poem that is not informed by intonation would have difficulty in making. Similarly, it is at the points where Eleanor Berry's analysis of 'Asphodel, That Greeny Flower' demonstrates

---

[68]A similar objection can be made to Richard Cureton's suggestion, in his review of Holder, that intonational analysis might reveal the 'attitudinal expression' of contemporary verse: Richard Cureton, 'Rethinking Holder', *Language and Literature*, 7 (1998), 51-63 (p. 56).

divergences between lineation and intonation, and consequently the autonomous role played by the latter, that it is likely to be most valuable.

These analyses are, then, suggestive of further work in the field. However, a major problem remains. If English, as a written language, is bad at notating patterns of syllabic prominence, such that a given text may be performed with more than one rhythm, it is worse at notating intonation; as stated above, this is a likely cause of intonation's former "Cinderella" status within linguistics. It is a problem that has not been solved, and compromises the analyses of both Berry and Holder, as they themselves admit; Berry implicitly, in the tentativeness of her diagnoses - she refers to nothing more definite than 'possible intonation groups' - and Alan Holder more explicitly. Suggesting that a place be made in prosody for intonation, Holder wonders:

> would there be a sonic text in the classroom, or merely a mélange of particular realizations of a given piece of verse?[69]

The reference is, of course, to the disputes which gave birth to reader-response theory, and to Stanley Fish's *Is There A Text In This Class?* (1980). Comparable disputes can probably be expected if an assertive use of intonation contours is made on the basis of critical intuition alone. Indeed, despite Holder's frankness, at least one commentator on his work finds this problem so serious as to prove prohibitive.[70] One way around it may be the use of authorial tape recordings, where available; but these, in turn, raise other questions of method.[71]

While intonational prosody remains a relatively unexplored field, therefore, and one which may enhance understanding of nonmetrical

---

[69]Holder, p. 201.
[70]George T. Wright, 'Hearing the Measures', *Style*, 31 (1997), 148-94 (pp. 182-83).
[71]A recent study of Basil Bunting adopts this approach: Ian Pople, 'Basil Bunting's *Briggflatts*: A Case Study in Intonational Prosody', *Language and Literature*, 7 (1998), 21-38.

poetry, the critical and theoretical problems associated with it are significant.

Chapter 2
Notating and Predicting Poetic Sound

Chapter 1 suggests two main goals for work in poetic sound: the ability to give a closer account of the surface detail of spoken English, and a means to connect this detail to the printed form of the poetic text. These two goals can be considered, respectively, as those of *notation* and *prediction*. The first implies the need for a full understanding of the sounds available to speakers, and a method by which they may be notated in scansion form; the second, an appreciation of how these sounds are cued by written or printed language, such that the likelihood of their presence in a performance of the poem can be ascertained.

Some of the means by which these goals may be achieved are discussed in this chapter. In particular, the use of linguistics is examined: phonetic, phonological and corpus-based approaches are explored, and ways considered in which they might be applied to poetry.

1 NOTATION: A REPERTOIRE OF FEATURES

To turn to linguistics for an account of speech sound is not a simple matter, especially for a nonspecialist. Research has traditionally been conducted by two different disciplines: phonetics and phonology. John Lyons describes the difference between them as follows:

> If the linguist is asked whether two 'sounds' are the same or different, or how many 'sounds' there are in a given language, he must know whether the question is one of substance or form; whether these 'sounds' are to be regarded as physical entities which can be described without knowing to what language they belong or whether they are to be described in terms of such differences and similarities of sound as are functional in the language (by 'functional' is to be understood 'relevant for the purpose of communication'). In the first case he will give a *phonetic* description of

> what he hears or analyses instrumentally; in the second he will give a *phonological* description.[1]

Ideally, the two approaches to linguistic sound should complement each other: assertions about the way in which sound carries meaning should be supported by accurate experimental observation of the sounds themselves. However, such a unified account of intonational and rhythmic phenomena remains largely an ideal, and a fairly rigid professional distinction exists between practitioners of the two disciplines.[2] Its consequences can be seen in differences in the categories used to divide up speech sounds. Terms which outsiders often use unproblematically - such as *stress* - are associated with widely different traditions of enquiry and, indeed, may be differently defined.

In consequence, prosodic criticism may need to choose a broad alignment with one or the other tradition if it is to be able to approach verse sound with a full and precisely-defined range of descriptive terms. Phonology has been the more common source of specialised notations, as Chapter 1 illustrated. These include the different levels of stress found in Marjorie Perloff's scansions, which derive from the structuralist phonology of Trager and Smith, and the three intonational profiles used by Alan Holder, which are taken from Dwight Bolinger's model of speech intonation. In contrast, perhaps the only phonetically-defined feature that has been appealed to is the intonation group, whose use was suggested by Eleanor Berry. Phonological notations have notable advantages, such as clarity and concision; they have also, at some periods, seemed to possess a significant predictive value.[3] However, it can be argued that they bring

---

[1]John Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 99.

[2]On the history of this division, see John J. Ohala, 'The Relationship Between Phonetics and Phonology', in *The Handbook of Phonetic Sciences*, ed. by William J. Hardcastle and John Laver (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 674-94.

[3]See section 2, below.

with them considerable disadvantages, which have perhaps not been fully addressed.

A) PHONETICS OR PHONOLOGY?

A summary of the differences between phoneticians' and phonologists' respective working assumptions is given by D. Robert Ladd and Anne Cutler, in a study published in 1983. Ladd and Cutler describe the practical distinction between the two disciplines as deriving from a difference of interest.[4] Both study the 'prosodic' features of language: pitch, duration, and intensity.[5] However, while phoneticians are characterised as *measurers*, concerned with the realisation of sound, phonologists are *model-makers*, concerned with its representation. In consequence, phoneticians and phonologists may operate on very different working assumptions:

> One approach - let us call it the "concrete" approach - defines prosody more or less in physical terms, as *those phenomena that involve the acoustic parameters of pitch, duration and intensity.* [...] [T]he "abstract" approach sees prosody more from the point of view of its place in linguistic structure than its phonetic nature, and tends to class as prosodic *any phenomena that involve phonological organization at levels above the segment*.[6]

While phonetic categories are defined, at least in part, in terms of empirically measurable phenomena, phonological categories tend to draw meaning from their place in a larger theoretical model: that which, at a

---

[4]D. Robert Ladd and Anne Cutler, 'Models and Measurements in the Study of Prosody', in *Prosody: Models and Measurements*, ed. by D. Robert Ladd and Anne Cutler (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1983), pp. 1-10.

[5]This is the most common set of prosodic features. Some commentators exclude duration (e.g. John Laver, *Principles of Phonetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 27).

[6]Ladd and Cutler, pp. 1-2. Ladd and Cutler found that the two traditions had in many cases 'simply ignored each other' (p. 3); a more recent study suggests a rapprochement (Anne Cutler, Delphine Dahan and Wilma van Donselaar, 'Prosody in the Comprehension of Spoken Language: A Literature Review', *Language and Speech*, 40 (1997), 141-201 (p. 143)).

given stage in the development of linguistic theory, is proposed as the best description of the workings of the English language.

Ladd and Cutler's account suggests several reasons why the traditions of phonology may make its categories and notations unsuitable for the purposes of poetry criticism. It can be questioned whether categories designed to describe and explain one phenomenon - linguistic structure - are the most appropriate tools with which to describe another: poetic form. That such categories may not be phonetically verified suggests further difficulties; it also raises the question of the kinds of phonetic verification that might be appropriate to categories used in the description of poetry. Finally, it is worth examining the uses to which the notations eventually determined upon are likely to be put. These concerns cannot adequately be considered at a generalised level, and so it is proposed to examine them in turn, using specific phonetic and phonological features to enable discussion of the choices that may be involved.

i) Phonology and poetic form

One of the aspects of speech sound that is of particular relevance to poetry is the 'chunks' into which speech typically falls, averaging four or five words, and containing one or more particularly prominent syllables. A context in which these are particularly noticeable is news broadcasting:

> Mr BENN
> in a speech in BRIstol
> said the POWers of the Prime MINister
> comBINED
> with the job of party LEADer
> were so GREAT
> that they aMOUNTed
> to a system of PERsonal RULE[7]

---

[7]Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen, *An Introduction to English Prosody* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), p. 194.

Such 'chunks' are sometimes said to correspond to the stages of information processing through which the brain passes as speech is prepared and uttered, and, as such, would reflect both syntactic structure and semantic priorities.[8] Although signalled particularly clearly in formal contexts such as this, they play an important role in every type of speech communication.

The context in which such a unit is likely to be most useful in discussions of poetry is that of the poetic line. In most metrical and some nonmetrical poetry, a large majority of linebreaks are syntactically end-stopped; the strong correlation between syntax and the units of intonation creates a strong association between the line and the single intonational 'chunk'.[9] However, some nonmetrical poetry regularly dissociates linebreak from syntactic juncture. This has the effect, noted in Chapter 1, of making the establishment of the aural implications of linebreak difficult, but of considerable potential significance. A precise definition of the intonational 'chunk' is an important element in this undertaking.

The only commentator on poetry to appeal to such a definition, Eleanor Berry, uses criteria and a terminology drawn from phonetics.[10] In this, as stated above, her practice is exceptional, given the predominance of phonological categories in studies of verse sound. There are, indeed, significant differences between phonetic and phonological definitions of this basic unit of speech sound. However, the reasons why the phonetic unit should be preferred in this case are not made clear by Berry and have

---

[8]E.g. Wallace Chafe, 'Writing in the Perspective of Speaking', in *Studying Writing: Linguistic Approaches*, ed. by Charles R. Cooper and Sidney Greenbaum (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986), pp. 12-39.

[9]The standard study is Harai Golomb, *Enjambment in Poetry: Language and Verse in Interaction* (Tel Aviv: Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, 1979), pp. 23-41.

[10]Berry, 'William Carlos Williams', p. 367. The practice of Richard Cureton is ambiguous in this respect (e.g. *Rhythmic Phrasing*, pp. 310-11).

not, as far as I know, subsequently been discussed. By examining the issues raised, choices to be made in cases where the best course to follow is less clear may be made easier, and general preferences helped to emerge.

Phoneticians divide speech into *intonation groups* or *tone units*. These are defined by the presence of a certain number of boundary features, such as anacrusis (a slight increase in tempo over unaccented syllables at the beginning of the group), and by the presence of a pitch accent.[11] Such cues are, in most cases, sufficient for the listener to perceive an utterance as divided into segments such as those quoted above; some commentators suggest that cases of doubt may be resolved by an appeal to grammar or semantics.[12]

Phonologists have an equivalent term, the *intonational phrase*. It is typically defined, in part, on syntactic criteria, but more important than these are considerations relating to the phonological model known as the *prosodic hierarchy*. This is a theoretical model, widely adopted within contemporary phonology, which is designed to help explain the ways in which lexical and syntactic structure is reflected, via phonology, in speech behaviour.[13] It consists of ranked layers, which, in descending order to word level, are the utterance (*U*), the intonational phrase (*I* or *IP*; *IP* will be preferred in this discussion), the phonological phrase (ϕ or *P*), the clitic group (*C*), and the phonological word (ω or *W*).[14] These units are defined in such a way as to be able to describe observable norms of speech behaviour in the languages of the world. Part of their definition, however, is theory-internal; for example, most phonologists hold that every array of

---

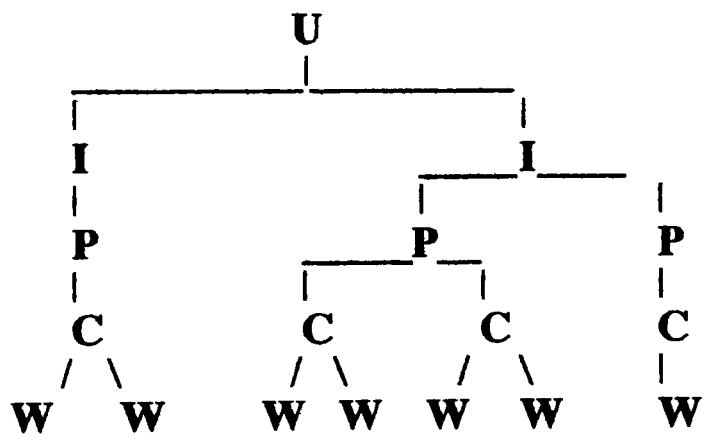
[11]Crystal, *Prosodic Systems*, pp. 205-10; Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, pp. 75-76; Cruttenden, *Intonation*, pp. 29-30.
[12]E.g. Crystal, *Prosodic Systems*, p. 207.
[13]Marina Nespor and Irene Vogel, *Prosodic Phonology* (Dordrecht: Foris, 1986), pp. 1-6. See also Carlos Gussenhoven and Haike Jacobs, *Understanding Phonology* (London: Arnold, 1998), pp. 239-255.
[14]Nespor and Vogel, p. 11.

units must conform to the Strict Layer Hypothesis (SLH), which states, in one formulation, that:

> A prosodic constituent of rank *n* is immediately dominated by a single constituent of rank *n+1*. [15]

That is to say, that any C is made up of whole W's, any P of whole C's, and so on. Any definition of the IP must, at least at the current stage of phonological theory, respect this hypothesis. The commonest definition thus states that an IP consists of a sequence of phonological phrases, grouped together on syntactic and certain other criteria. Some of these are relatively pragmatic in nature: Nespor and Vogel state that the division of an utterance into IPs may be 'restructured' on the grounds of length, rate of speech, style, and contrastive prominence.[16] Nonetheless, the rules of the hierarchy apply, and, in particular, the SLH must not be infringed.[17]

An example of an analysis of the prosodic hierarchy of an utterance is the following, suggested by the phonologist and metrist Bruce Hayes:



On Tuesdays, he gives the Chinese dishes [18]

---

[15]Gussenhoven and Jacobs, p. 242. The SLH was proposed and named in Elizabeth O. Selkirk, *Phonology and Syntax: The Relation between Sound and Structure* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), p. 26. D. Robert Ladd, *Intonational Phonology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), points out that, whereas Selkirk suggests the SLH as a working hypothesis, it is now 'widely held to be self-evident' (p. 238).

[16]Nespor and Vogel, p. 193. For example, a formal, measured style may break an utterance down into a greater number of IPs (p. 195).

[17]Nespor and Vogel, pp. 196-97.

[18]Bruce Hayes, 'The Prosodic Hierarchy in Meter', in *Phonetics and Phonology, Volume 1: Rhythm and Meter*, ed. by Paul Kiparsky and Gilbert Youmans (San Diego:

In this utterance, on the definition given above, there are two intonational phrases, one either side of the comma.

It is likely that, in most contexts in which the above sentence might be uttered, the distribution of empirically determined intonation groups would follow that of the IPs described; that is, phonetic cues would coincide with the boundaries of the phonological units.[19] Such a convergence is, in general terms, sought by both phonetic and phonological traditions. However, in the case of intonational phrasing, it is necessary within neither. The distribution of the phonetically-defined intonation group is determined on an empirical basis, without, in most cases, regard to the phonological structure of the utterance. Among phonologists, similarly, there exists a widely-held assumption that listeners' knowledge of a language will cause them to perceive the phonological structure of an utterance even in the absence of phonetic cues.[20] As a result, the two units are theoretically independent of each other, despite their similarities and frequent coincidence. The choice of one or the other as a basic descriptive tool for poetry criticism will thus have significantly different consequences.

Perhaps the most important of these consequences can be seen in a context where the link between IP and intonation group is blocked. This might be the case if the sentence quoted above were set out as a poem - if, for example, it were lineated as follows:

On Tuesdays
he
gives the Chinese
dishes

Academic Press, 1989), pp. 201-60 (p. 202). The meaning of the utterance is 'He gives the dishes to the Chinese', not 'He gives the Chinese dishes to someone'.

[19]Although not identical; see Gussenhoven and Jacobs, p. 245.

[20]This view of the relationship between phonology and perception derives from Noam Chomsky and Morris Halle, *The Sound Pattern of English* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 24 (hereafter cited as *SPE*). It is discussed from a variety of viewpoints in a special issue of *Journal of Phonetics* (18.3: July 1990).

Although l. 1 corresponds to an IP, lines 2-4, taken individually, clearly do not. Indeed, no single unit or combination of units in Hayes's analysis can describe these lines, which, in turn, consist of a clitic group (l. 1), a phonological word (l. 2), three words that together constitute one and a half clitic groups and three quarters of a phonological phrase (l. 3), and a single word that is metrically 'strong' enough to constitute a phonological phrase by itself. Moreover, the context-sensitive suggestions of Nespor and Vogel cannot help here; to describe these lines as restructured IPs would, given the sharing of Cs and Ps between l. 2 and l. 3, break the Strict Layer Hypothesis. Even if the IPs parsed by Hayes are perceived by the listener on the grounds of his or her knowledge of English phonology, they will clearly fail to correlate with the linebreaks indicated here, and would, if they constituted the only 'chunking' device available, mislead listeners as to the shape and form of this 'poem'.

With a phonetically-defined unit, on the other hand, these problems do not arise. Such a unit might be of two sorts. If the 'poem' is read aloud slowly and attentively, it is possible that every line will be assigned its own intonation group, with boundary markers chosen among pause, anacrusis, and the resetting of the pitch 'baseline', and with the minimal internal structure of a pitch accent on *Tues-*, *he*, *-ese* and *dish-*. Such a reading would suggest a desire to give strong emphasis to each one of these items. Alternatively, the poem could be read as two intonation groups, split after l. 1, but with the breaks at l. 2 and l. 3 marked by a pause. This type of reading, which uses pause in the manner of a hesitant speaker, corresponds to the manner in which the poet Robert Creeley, for example, asks that his own, similarly enjambment-heavy poetry be read.[21] Whichever approach is adopted, the phonetic parallelism will lead the listener to hear each line as a

---

[21]On Creeley and pause, see below.

'chunk' that on some level is equivalent to every other. His or her appreciation of these chunks will, naturally, make use of an awareness of English phonology: that the intonation group has a phonological status within English, and that the pause-delimited sequence does not, accounts for the differences noted between the two performances. In either case, however, the chunks are likely to be perceived as the basic units of form of this 'poem'. Only a phonetic definition of the intonation group in the first case, and a sensitivity to largely non-phonological cues such as pause in the second, will allow such a perception to be described.

A phonetic definition of the basic 'chunk' of intonation thus enables the description of phenomena that are important to poetry, but that may be unimportant in other contexts and are poorly served by the prevailing phonological model. It is possible that that model will be reformulated in such a way that these phenomena become describable; the reworking or abandonment of the SLH is one such possibility.[22] However, to wait for such a change would achieve little. Moreover, a definition that carries an explicit phonetic bias has the great advantage of giving any account of poetic form an irreducibly sonic component, implying that the response to poetic sound is based on cues to perception that are not simply or always to be explained as the effect of the listener's knowledge of phonological structure.[23] This has significant consequences.

Firstly, phonetically-defined categories permit the assessment of the importance of particular performance decisions, and of phonetic realisation in general, to poetic form. For example, the poems of Robert Creeley are superficially similar to those of William Carlos Williams. Both have

---

[22]See, for example, Ladd's proposal of *compound phrase domains*, which makes use of an utterance similar in some ways to the dummy poem proposed here (Ladd, *Intonational Phonology*, pp. 237-51).

[23]For the distinction between the categories of poetic form and those of phonology in a metrical context, see Kristin Hanson and Paul Kiparsky, 'A Parametric Theory of Poetic Meter', *Language*, 72 (1996), 248-335 (pp. 326-32).

written many poems in which the relationship between line and syntax is as irregular as in the dummy poem. However, as has long been recognised, the two poets read their own work in dramatically different ways. Creeley always pauses at the end of a line; Williams almost never does. It can be argued that this difference is likely to have a significant impact on listeners' appreciation of the two poets' respective uses of poetic form; it can also be argued that the form of one or both poets' work is based in other kinds of phenomena, and that these cues are thus without consequence. The investigation of either proposition on any but phonetic lines would be very difficult. Furthermore, the use of phonetic criteria makes necessary an engagement with issues of performance that many readers find important, but that criticism has tended to neglect.

Secondly, such units allow the partial dissociation of aesthetic response from interpretation. They may be used, for example, to describe cases where the listener to a poem is unfamiliar with the language in which it is written and performed - an application to which phonological notations may not be put.[24] Richard Cureton has described listening to poetry in an unfamiliar language as 'hardly an enriching experience', but such a judgement can be disputed.[25] In comparison with poetry in one's own language, it is clear that much will be lacking; yet something will remain. I speak no Russian; listening to performances of Russian nonmetrical poetry, I have nonetheless felt able to appreciate, in a limited way, the roles played by intonational 'chunks', as well as by syllabic prominences, in the form of

---

[24]Laver, p. 29: '[p]honetic description is said to be based on the assumption that the process of description does not require knowledge about the formal, linguistic value that the event being described might have as a coded, communicative element in some particular language. In this sense, [it] is held to be independent of the phonological description of the language involved.'

[25]Cureton, *Rhythmic Phrasing*, p. 196. Compare Eliot's famous comments in *Dante* (London: Faber and Faber, 1929; repr. 1965), pp. 7-9.

the poems read. Given my ignorance of the language, these chunks can only have been phonetically cued.[26]

Thirdly, basing the primary description of a poem on phonetic cues, whose relationship to perception is relatively transparent, enables a consistent description of the discrepancies between the sound of a poem and its linguistic structure. It is clear that phonetics alone cannot capture all of a poem: the relationship between the units described and linguistic entities with which the listener is familiar is obviously of importance. In the dummy poem, for example, it is clear that boundary markers placed at the end of ll. 2 and 4 will be perceived as less unusual than those placed at the end of ll. 1 and 3, and that this sense of the unusual can only be explained in terms of the lines' disruption of the normal patterns of English. These patterns may be explored using phonological categories; they may also be explored with reference to the criteria of syntax and length through which these categories are in part defined, or to statistical observation of the usual distribution of intonation-group boundaries. Such an exploration, however, requires an account of poetic sound which is in the first place independent of any of these categories.

Finally, from a methodological point of view, it can be noted that a phonetically-defined intonation group has a relationship to perception that is straightforward and has been empirically demonstrated. Even where the types of critical discussion so far described could be carried out using phonologically-defined units, the need to rely on unverified assumption as the sole evidence for their perceptual status would be a significant disadvantage.

---

[26]The capacity of listeners to perceive intonational boundaries even in delexicalised speech - that is, speech from which segmental information has been removed - is demonstrated by Jan Roelof de Pijper and Angelien A. Sanderman, 'On the Perceptual Strength of Prosodic Boundaries and its Relation to Suprasegmental Cues', *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 96 (1994), 2037-47. Journal hereafter cited as *JASA*.

This discussion has focused on a single feature, but the arguments used in support of a phonetics-based approach are intended to be more generally applicable. No rejection of phonology is implied: if phonology means, as Lyons states, the description of forms that are 'functional for the purposes of communication', then the kind of units proposed in this discussion are certainly phonological; they play a role in the communication of poetic form. However, this is not the kind of 'purpose of communication' for which most phonologies have been developed. Phonetically-defined categories allow empirical deduction of what those purposes might be, unconstrained by the priorities of another discipline. They allow the value to poetry of its purely phonetic element to be asserted, and for the relationship of that element to phonological categories to be investigated.

ii) What kind of phonetic description?

It follows from the above that the descriptions of stress proposed by many of the prosodists who have used linguistics as a resource in this area are unsatisfactory. The most widespread of these is the presentation of stress as a single feature, graded into a set of discrete levels of strength; the four diacritical marks used by Marjorie Perloff and Richard Cureton, and the numbers used in studies by Rosemary Gates, are examples of this.[27] Both models are phonological, and have their origins in Trager and Smith's *An Outline of English Structure* and Chomsky and Halle's *The Sound Pattern of English* (1968; hereafter *SPE*), respectively.[28] Both, moreover, have been accused of designing their models with little thought for phonetic

---

[27]Cureton, *Rhythmic Phrasing*, pp. 181-82; Rosemary L. Gates, 'Forging An American Poetry From Speech Rhythms: Williams After Whitman', *Poetics Today*, 8 (1987), 503-27.

[28]For the relationship between structuralist and generative approaches, and a full account of the development of ideas of syllabic prominence, see Mary E. Beckman, *Stress and Non-Stress Accent* (Dordrecht: Foris, 1986).

evidence.[29] For example, *SPE* was published fully ten years after it had been demonstrated that syllabic prominence was in large measure cued by pitch excursions. Its authors' explicit decision to exclude pitch from discussion seems to epitomise the gulf between model-makers and measurers described by Ladd and Cutler.[30]

However, phonetics is no more a unified discipline than linguistics, and the notion of 'phonetic evidence' is a complex one. There are several kinds of phonetic evidence, as there are several kinds of phonetics, and any attempt to refine or replace the levels-based model of syllabic prominence on phonetic grounds will need to be explicit in their negotiation.

There are three main types of description that fall within the scope of phonetics: in David Crystal's formulation, these are the articulatory, the acoustic and the auditory.[31] An *articulatory* description of syllabic prominence will focus on the speaker's expenditure of effort, and on the muscles and other organs used in the production of a prominent syllable. An *acoustic* description studies the physical characteristics of the speech signal; it can distinguish, for example, between prominences cued by changes in fundamental frequency, in intensity, and in duration of the prominent syllable. The physical characteristics of speech are not always accurately discerned by the listener; while the direct perceptual correlate of intensity is loudness, for example, it appears that loudness judgements depend on duration as well as on intensity, while judgements of change in pitch do not correlate arithmetically with changes in fundamental frequency.[32] An *auditory* approach to phonetics examines the distinctions

---

[29]E.g. Beckman, p. 50.

[30]D.B. Fry, 'Duration and Intensity as Physical Correlates of Linguistic Stress', *JASA*, 27 (1955), 765-68; 'Experiments in the Perception of Stress', *Language and Speech*, 1 (1958), 126-52; *SPE*, p. 15.

[31]Crystal, *Prosodic Systems*, p. 13; see also Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, p. 5. Laver prefers *organic*, *acoustic* and *perceptual* (pp. 26-27).

[32]Philip Lieberman and Sheila E. Blumstein, *Speech Physiology, Speech Perception and Acoustic Phonetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 154-5.

which the human listener is capable of perceiving, rather than those which are instrumentally measurable in the speech stream.

The levels-based account of stress is justified within none of these approaches. The articulatory distinction between different kinds of prominence is relatively poorly understood, but it is clear that no unitary levels-based model can describe the physiological mechanisms which are at work.[33] Fry's experiments, and others subsequently, have demonstrated that an accurate acoustic model of syllabic prominence will account for shifting combinations of pitch, duration and intensity, as well as non-prosodic aspects such as vowel quality. No single acoustic feature correlates to prominence and again, it is impossible to speak meaningfully of 'levels' in this respect. The only approach within which the levels-based model might be justifiable is the auditory. Indeed, the terms in which Trager and Smith's original account is couched could be mistaken for those of auditory analysis. This, for example, is their explanation of the second weakest level of stress:

> Let us examine trisyllabic items like *animal, terrific.* In *animal* there is ´ [i.e., strongest stress] on the first syllable; the last two syllables are soft stressed, but the last is a bit stronger than the middle one.[34]

However, it is clear that this statement seeks an answer to the question 'How many stress levels does English have?', rather than 'Is syllabic prominence perceived in terms of levels, and, if so, how many?'. In responding to their own question, Trager and Smith rely on their own intuitions, on their beliefs about English structure, and, above all, on segmental information, so that the prominence of the syllables is always assessed within a linguistically meaningful context. When segmental information is factored out, such that the words which the syllables make

---

[33]Laver, pp. 512-13, describes some of these.
[34]Trager and Smith, p. 37.

up are not recognisable, the postulated levels are, it has been demonstrated, simply not perceivable.[35] The levels-based model thus represents a phonological analysis, and not an auditory-phonetic one.

In the previous section, it was argued that phonological categories should be not be adopted as primary descriptive tools. Rethinking the levels-based account of stress, and indeed of other potential features of poetic sound, entails a choice between the types of phonetic description. It is assumed that the interest of prosodic criticism lies primarily with the listener, rather than the speaker; although articulatory information may have an important role to play within speech processing, it is of itself, therefore, of limited application in this field.[36] Similarly, it is clear that a purely acoustic model of syllabic prominence is likely to be of restricted use; if a phonetic distinction is not perceptible, it can have no formal importance to poetry. The auditory approach, on the other hand, has the advantage of treating verse sound as a perceptual and, to a certain extent, a pre-linguistic phenomenon, distinct both from acoustics and phonology; its categories require familiarity with the particular language in which the poem is performed less than an ability to listen closely to the way in which prosodic features may be manipulated to formal and aesthetic ends. It therefore has much to recommend it, especially since, as stated above, phonological categories can, if required, be appealed to at a later stage of analysis.

However, as the discussion of Trager and Smith showed, it is difficult to separate an auditory account of linguistic prosody from the phonological response with which it is intimately bound up. There is little to be gained,

---

[35]Philip Lieberman, 'On the Acoustic Basis of Perception of Intonation by Linguists', *Word*, 21 (1965), 40-54. Lieberman's findings are discussed by Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, p. 66, and Beckman, pp. 50-51.

[36]On the *motor theory of speech perception*, which makes this claim, see Philip Lieberman, *Intonation, Perception and Language* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967), pp. 162-70; Lieberman and Blumstein, pp. 147-8; Couper-Kuhlen, pp. 25-26.

therefore, by adopting too rigid an approach. In the case of syllabic prominence, moreover, although many studies have examined the conditions under which listeners perceive 'stress', none has tried, as far as I know, to discover whether they are also able to discern the different causes.

One significant refinement is possible: the distinction between prominences that are cued by pitch, and those that are not. This is a distinction that plays a major part in contemporary accounts of intonation, both phonetic and phonological. In phonological terms, it has the advantage, discussed below, of enabling consideration of the link between prominence and semantics which pitch accents create. In contrast, the non-pitch cues to prominence - including, duration, intensity, vowel quality and even rhythmic context - are so multiple that they tend to be considered as an undifferentiated group.[37] However, the pitch / non-pitch distinction is not proposed here on phonological grounds, but on those of auditory phonetics, since the distinction between pitch and non-pitch prominences is one that is certainly open to perception. Work carried out in the field of corpus linguistics, discussed below, has made use of prosodic annotation, whereby trained transcribers listen to recordings of speech and note the prominences and tonal movements heard. In one such study, the only distinction drawn as to prominence type is that between pitch and non-pitch prominences, and no difficulty is reported in distinguishing the two.[38] If such distinctions are available to careful listeners, it is reasonable to believe that they may be functional within poetic form.

---

[37]See Chapter 3, below.

[38]Brian Pickering, Briony Williams and Gerry Knowles, 'Analysis of Transcriber Differences in the SEC', in *Working with Speech: Perspectives on Research into the Lancaster / IBM Spoken English Corpus*, ed. by Gerry Knowles, Anne Wichmann, and Peter Alderson (London: Longman, 1996), pp. 61-86. Phonological information was found to be necessary in associating particular prominences with particular syllables, but the prominences themselves appear to be traceable even from a signal where the segmental information has been filtered out (p. 66).

iii) Which notations?

The distinctions described so far will, like other categorising decisions taken in response to poetic sound, require a notation that may be used within scansion. In the case of the intonation group, there exists a tradition within phonetics-based approaches to intonation that readily supplies such a notation - the virgule, / - although minor differences exist. In the case of syllabic prominence, multiple traditions are available. The choice between them will in most cases be based on the pragmatic criteria of ease of use and comprehension. However, the distinction between pitch and non-pitch prominences raises a different kind of question, since this distinction, although here proposed on auditory grounds, is also, as just discussed, one that some phonologists now make use of in their own notations of English structure.[39] Phonetics-based notations are thus not the sole candidate for use in scansion.

Given the phonetics-based definition of the features proposed in this chapter and in Chapters 3 and 4, it follows that phonetics-based marks are preferable. Moreover, the added descriptive power of phonological notations may prove misleading; as stated above, phonological structure is not the same as aesthetic structure, and it would be unhelpful to confuse the two. Where phonetic resources are appealed to in this thesis, the attempt will always be made to limit the features imported to those which may be useful to prosody and to criticism; those for which an aesthetic, semantic or otherwise interesting function can be argued. Such a limitation is impossible with the global descriptions offered by phonology; in a context where such descriptions are used, it may also come - wrongly - to seem undesirable.

---

[39]E.g. Carlos Gussenhoven, 'The English Rhythm Rule as an Accent Deletion Rule', *Phonology*, 8 (1991), 1-35.

2 FROM 'NORMAL STRESS' TO 'FOCUS-TO-ACCENT'

The problem of performance prediction is a particularly awkward one for studies of nonmetrical prosody. One of the consequences of metre is that its status as perceptual phenomenon allows criticism to avoid most predictive difficulties; a regular rhythm of beats and offbeats is likely to be perceived, and associated with appropriate syllables, whatever the phonetic detail of the performance. That rhythm, moreover, is likely to be considered the most important formal element within the poem: although a description of phonetic realisation may add richness to local aspects of a given line or lines - as in those from 'Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister', quoted in Chapter 1 - an adequate account of form can be given without reference to this. This double role of metre - as a perceptual filter, guaranteeing a shared experience across a wide readership, and as a cultural fact, guiding the critical sense of formal priorities - is a powerful influence in reducing the need for discussions of questions of performance. The same is not true of free verse: lacking the 'filter', the realisation of individual syllables will directly influence the perceived form of the poem, and lacking the cultural fact, the particular description of that form will have significant consequences for criticism's ability to understand and describe the poem's literary and aesthetic qualities.

Writers on nonmetrical poetry thus have a rare freedom to perform, scan and anatomise poems as they see fit. However, this is a freedom which rarely seems to be enjoyed, at least explicitly. From a theoretical point of view, prosodic criticism continues to be dominated by Wimsatt and Beardsley's 'The Concept of Meter: An Exercise in Abstraction'. The authors were concerned to counter the use of Trager-Smith phonology by 'structural metrists' such as Seymour Chatman, whose work seemed to them to diminish prosody to the status of an ephemeral performance transcription:

> There is, of course, a sense in which the reading of the poem is primary: this is what the poem is *for*. But there is another and equally important sense in which the poem is not to be identified with any particular performance of it, or any set of such performances. Each performance of the poem is an actualization of it, and no doubt in the end everything we say about the poem ought to be translatable into a statement about an actual or possible performance of it. But not everything which is true of some particular performance will be necessarily true of the poem. There are many performances of the same poem - differing among themselves in many ways. A performance is an event, but the poem itself, if there *is* any poem, must be some kind of enduring object.[40]

The influence of what may be called the 'poem as object' approach has been great, and has led to an interesting critical paradox.[41] Many subsequent prosodists have used phonology - Trager-Smith and other - in pursuit of precisely Wimsatt and Beardsley's goal: the linguistic data which to Wimsatt and Beardsley seemed a distraction have themselves come to function as the stable centre of analysis. This widespread practice assumes that phonology can contribute to the predictive tracing of the path between text and performance, indeed, that it can assure the value of such a tracing. Although phonology has been ruled out, in preceding sections, as a source of notations, this aspect of it may have significant implications for criticism.

Among the prosodists to use phonology as a predictive tool is one of the foremost writers on nonmetrical poetry, Marjorie Perloff. In a study of William Carlos Williams's poetic development published in 1983, Perloff suggests that the poet moves from an aural poetics to an essentially visual one.[42] In constructing this argument, she uses a linguistic analysis to underpin her notation of Williams's well-known poem 'This Is Just To Say', contending that when the poet himself describes that work as

---

[40]Wimsatt and Beardsley, p. 587.

[41]Catherine Addison, 'Once Upon A Time: A Reader-Response Approach to Prosody', *College English,* 56 (1994), 655-678, traces this influence.

[42]Marjorie Perloff, '"To Give A Design": Williams and the Visualization of Poetry', in *William Carlos Williams: Man and Poet,* ed. by Carroll F. Terrell (Orono: National Poetry Foundation, 1981), pp. 159-86.

'metrically absolutely regular', he is confusing sound and shape.[43] The lines may *look* regular, Perloff asserts,

> [b]ut the poem actually goes like this:
>
> Í have éaten
> the plúms
> that were ín
> the ícebôx
>
> and whích
> yôu were próbably
> sáving
> for bréakfast
>
> Forgíve me
> they were delícious
> sô swéet
> and sô cóld
>
> The stanzas exhibit no regularity of stress and syllable count; indeed, except for lines 2 and 5 (each an iamb) and lines 8 and 9 (each an amphibrach), no two lines have the same metrical form.[44]

The Trager-Smith phonology which Perloff uses in her scansions is, as noted in the preceding section, phonetically unfounded. However, notation is only a part of the difficulty of free-verse prosody; also of importance is prediction. It is clear from the above that Perloff feels able to predict with some certainty how, in her own words, 'the poem actually goes'; it is this which gives force to her rebuttal of Williams's claims to metrical regularity. In the absence of any other explanation, it must be assumed that the source of this certainty is the phonology on which Perloff's scansion rests.

The assumption of such recourses to phonology is that the phonologist can make a set of statements about the language of the poem which will remain true however the poem is performed, and that the critic in search of

---

[43]Williams made the comment in an interview conducted in 1950 by John W. Gerber, included in *Interviews with William Carlos Williams: "Speaking Straight Ahead"*, ed. by Linda Welshimer Wagner (New York: New Directions, 1976), pp. 3-26 (p. 17); Perloff, '"To Give A Design"', p. 162.
[44]Perloff, '"To Give A Design"', pp. 162-3.

a scansion, and who has identified syllabic prominence as the object of that scansion, needs simply to appeal to the appropriate statements for his or her scansion to attain objective status. This approach derives from a phonological doctrine commonly known as 'normal stress'. This is the idea that, for every English sentence, a 'normal' stress contour exists, and can be predicted on the basis of rules which assign it. According to Robert Ladd, the doctrine can be dated to a 1946 study by Stanley Newman; it dominated linguistics until the 1970s.[45] Intonation, too, has also been said to be characterised by its rule-based predictability; Robert Stockwell asserted in 1972, for example, that:

> there is such a thing as a 'neutral' or 'normal' or 'colorless' intonation contour for any sentence, serving as a baseline against which all other possible contours are contrastable, and thereby meaningful.[46]

It is this idea of a 'normal' or 'baseline' description of stress and intonation which, as expressed in the work of Trager and Smith, underlies Perloff's scansion, and which has seemed at certain periods to hold out to prosodic criticism the promise of scansions of lasting value.

The Trager-Smith approach is a particularly pared-down manifestation of the 'normal stress' doctrine. It does not attempt to deal with the difficulties of predicting the prosodic features of connected speech. Instead, it relies on a distinction between *normal* and *contrastive* stress: the 'normal' stress pattern of words and compounds can be described with certainty, and exceptions can be made for special, contrastive cases - where the words *elevator operator*, for example, carry an implication such as 'that's *operator*, not *repairer*'. In effect, therefore, the Trager-Smith model

---

[45]Ladd, *Intonational Phonology*, p. 160. Newman's analysis is 'On the Stress System of English', *Word*, 2 (1946), 171-187.

[46]Robert Stockwell, 'The Role of Intonation: Reconsiderations and Other Considerations', in *Intonation*, ed. by Dwight Bolinger (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. 87-109 (pp. 88-9). 'Intonation' here includes prominence patterns as well as pitch contours.

limits itself to single words and compounds, and does not so much predict as define; the stress patterns it produces resemble a detailed version of the stress marks used within dictionaries as a guide to typical pronunciation.

Such an approach was superseded, within phonology, by the generativism of *SPE*. The model of stress which Chomsky and Halle propose is, in respect of prediction, much more sophisticated. In particular, it is alive to potential differences between the stress pattern of a single word, and the same word's pattern when embedded in connected speech.[47] It remains, nonetheless, dependent on a simple distinction between the 'normal' and the 'contrastive'.

SPE describes stress in connected speech through the repeated application of rules, most famously the Nuclear Stress Rule (NSR).[48] The NSR assigns the primary stress in a major constituent to its rightmost primary-stressed vowel (with primary stress being determined by the category membership of the containing word), and the rule is reapplied cyclically until the whole utterance is described. At each re-application of the NSR, and consequent assignment of a primary stress, all other stresses within the appropriate domain are lowered by one level. For example, each of the words in the sentence *Sam saw John* is a 'content word', a potential carrier of primary stress, thus:

[Sam]	[saw]	[John]
1	1	1

In moving towards a description of the words in connected speech, however, the NSR must be applied, beginning with the rightmost domain. This is the verb phrase *saw John*. *John*, as the rightmost constituent, will

---

[47]The relationship between *SPE* and Newman is discussed in Susan Schmerling, *Aspects of English Sentence Stress* (London: University of Texas Press, 1976), pp. 9-12.
[48]*SPE*, p. 17.

take the primary stress; the other constituent will, according to the NSR, see its stress level reduce by one:

Sam	[saw	John][49]
	2	1

The NSR is then reapplied to the broader domain which includes the preceding string - in this case, the whole sentence - and, again, the stresses other than the primary, as determined by this re-application of the rule, must be demoted by one level; the final description of the sentence is thus as follows:

Sam	saw	John
2	3	1

This is a simple example, designed to illustrate how a rule-based predictive mechanism operates. Its importance here lies in the fact that, for Chomsky and Halle, this analysis has a normative status, describing accurately the stress contour of this and similar sentences as it is present in the language-user's *competence*. Any other conceivable stress pattern is 'assigned to the theory of performance'; it is a product of exceptional circumstances, and linguistically irrelevant.[50]

Such apparent definitiveness has clear attractions for a poetry criticism seeking to underwrite its scansions. These were made explicit in an article by Roger Fowler published in 1966, at a time when he was an advocate of the Trager-Smith method.[51] Fowler proposed that the rhythm of metrical poetry should be considered as the product of tension between its metre on the one hand, and, on the other, what Fowler called 'prose rhythm', by

---

[49]Chomsky and Halle use *1* for the strongest stress, *2* for the next strongest, and so on down.

[50]*SPE*, pp. 25-26.

[51]Roger Fowler, '"Prose Rhythm" and Metre', in *Essays on Style and Language* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 82-99.

which he meant the stress patterns of the words of the poem, considered apart from any influence of metre; stress patterns which were inherent, following Trager-Smith, and performance-independent.[52] Fowler expresses this as follows:

> a composite of phonological elements which derive from the grammatical and lexical form of the poem, and which *can be readily deduced without having recourse to oral renditions*[53]

A silent reading, with no reference to performance, is thus presented as an adequate basis for scansion. A final footnote states that Fowler had read Wimsatt and Beardsley's 1959 study after the writing of his own article, but that 'the similarity to my own views will be obvious'.[54] The Trager-Smith model, like generative linguistics and its successors, seems to offer metrists a method of producing scansions to which the variability of human reading practice is irrelevant, and which can thus express something objective about poems.

The value of such an approach to poetry can be questioned. On the one hand, as noted above, it can be debated whether such attempts at objectivity are philosophically possible or desirable; few other modes of criticism seek to make such claims. More immediately, however, its phonological underpinning has become much less certain. It is no longer the case that syntax is seen as the direct route to prominence distribution; during the 1980s and 1990s, phonology showed an increasing openness to the idea that pragmatic factors must be taken into account in any explicatory account of English phonology. As a result, 'normal stress' rules now enjoy considerably less prestige.

---

[52]Given that Marjorie Perloff's analysis deals with a poem where no traditional metre is present, this is also, of course, her method.
[53]Fowler, p. 83. Emphasis added.
[54]Fowler, p. 99.

This development has in a large part been prompted by the work of a single theorist, Dwight Bolinger. Beginning in the 1970s, and until his death in 1992, Bolinger repeatedly insisted that any rule-based framework for predicting rhythm and intonation was irredeemably flawed. To predict stress patterns in connected speech was to misunderstand the nature of syllabic prominence. *Stress* should be defined purely in terms of a given syllable's potential for perceptual prominence; for Bolinger, there is no compelling reason why the speaker must realise this potential prominence unless he or she chooses to do so. Moreover, this choice is not made on the basis of rules, but follows from the speaker's communicative intentions. Bolinger's stance was first set out in an article of 1972, whose argument is encapsulated by its famous title: 'Accent Is Predictable (If You're A Mind-Reader)'.[55] In it, he cited sentences which did not appear to conform to the predictions of the NSR - or rather, of the NSR as it had recently been modified by Joan Bresnan in order to cope with certain apparent exceptions - and compared them to grammatically identical sentences which did so conform.[56] For example, in each of the following pairs, the second sentence seems to follow Bresnan's rules, while the first does not:

(1a) The end of the chapter is reserved for various pròblems to compúterize.
(1b) The end of the chapter is reserved for various próblems to solve.

(2a) I'm hot. I'm looking for sòmething còol to drínk.
(2b) Next month we may be out on the street. I'm looking for a hóuse to rent.

(3a) I have a bòy to cáne.
(3b) I have a bóy to see.[57]

---

[55]Dwight Bolinger, 'Accent Is Predictable (If You're A Mind-Reader)', *Language*, 48 (1972), 633-44.
[56]Joan Bresnan, 'Sentence Stress and Syntactic Transformations', *Language*, 47 (1971), 257-80.
[57]Bolinger, 'Accent Is Predictable', pp. 633-4. The mark ´ denotes a primary accent, ` a secondary.

Bolinger's explanation of the accentual differences between these grammatically identical sentences is simply that there is *no* codifiable link between grammar and prosody, which for him are domains that should be kept separate. Instead, what motivates the differences within each sentence pair is the speaker's changed point of interest.

In (1a), (2a) and (3a), the speaker has decided that the operation being described - computerising, drinking, caning - is to be the utterance's point of *information focus*; in (1b), (2b) and (3b) it is to be the thing operated upon. The accent serves to signal the focus; this approach has become known as *Focus-to-Accent* or *FTA* theory.[58] In the second sentence pair, for example, it can be imagined that the speaker of (2a) is more concerned with the need to drink than with the supplementary desire that the drink be cool, while the speaker of (2b) is trying to get across his or her need of a house; the method of payment is, for whatever reason, less important. In (3), the speaker - Bolinger suggests Thomas Arnold - presumably sees boys very frequently, but does not cane them on every occasion that he sees them. In (3a), *cane* is thus a relatively interesting and informative word, and attracts the main accent; the verb in (3b), on the other hand, adds no such new interest, and so the focus, and thus the accent, is assigned to *boy*. The same principle holds at a more general level for (1a) and (1b): to say that one has *problems to solve* is such an ordinary event that the verb can be left unaccented - it is to be expected in this context, and does not require special emphasis. To say that one has *problems to computerise* is less common, and the verb is highlighted accordingly. A striking aspect of Bolinger's approach is its emphasis on the speaker's freedom of choice as to accent. For example, contrasting the utterances *I have a clóck to clean*

---

[58]The term 'Focus-to-Accent' is proposed in Carlos Gussenhoven, 'Focus, Mode, and the Nucleus', *Journal of Linguistics*, 19 (1983), 377-417.

and oil and *I still have most of the gárden to wèed and fértilize*, Bolinger comments that these performances are not definitive:

> The point is that the speaker adjusts the accents to suit his meaning. *Weed and fertilize* can be de-accented; *clean and oil* can be accented. It is in the nature of the case that our examples can show probabilities, rarely certainties.[59]

This is very different from the language of most phonologies.

Bolinger's central perception - the link between focus and accent - is now widely accepted, yet how to carry it forward has not always been clear.[60] A distinction is sometimes drawn between 'radical' and 'structural' FTA approaches.[61] The first of these, which was Bolinger's own, refuses any role for phonological rules in predicting accent placement, which it sees as universal and gestural. A typical (and typically sympathetic) Bolingerian explanation for accentual variation is the following:

> Consider a situation in which two persons are in bed together; at 2.00 A.M, one wakes up, sniffs, feels the blankets, and says
>
> (12) My Gód! This bed's on fíre!
>
> The same speaker, startled out of a sound sleep and without time to gather his thoughts, would more likely say
>
> (13) My Gód! This béd's on fire!
>
> [...] In (12) the bed-location is background, a known location; the speaker is fully aware of where he is and there is no need to call attention to it - the fire is the thing. In (13) the speaker is at first disoriented, and then realizes that it is the bed that is the danger spot.[62]

---

[59]Bolinger, 'Accent Is Predictable', p. 635.

[60]Two commentators date to 1980 the acceptance of FTA theory into the phonological mainstream. According to Ladd, *Intonational Phonology*, p. 161, it came with the incorporation of Bolingerian ideas into Janet Pierrehumbert's PhD thesis; Carlos Gussenhoven, *On the Grammar and Semantics of Sentence Accents* (Dordrecht: Foris, 1984), points to another study of that year, by Cutler and Isard, as evidence of a general recognition of 'the bankruptcy of syntax-dependent descriptions of intonation' (p. 1).

[61]The terms are proposed in Ladd, pp. 163-166.

[62]Dwight Bolinger, *Intonation and its Uses: Melody in Grammar and Discourse* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), pp. 229-30.

As this example illustrates, Bolinger's understanding of accent-assignment is that the speaker's different feelings towards, excitement at, or belief in the relative importance of the different parts of his or her utterance constitute a sufficient explanation of its accentual structure; no grammatical or other rules constrain this process. The alternative approach, which is associated with the work of Carlos Gussenhoven and D. Robert Ladd, believes that this 'highlighting' function of intonation is circumscribed by language-specific rules; that, although speakers appear to enjoy the freedom which Bolinger describes, in many cases the accentual pattern can be predicted by some kind of rule, although one that will be more flexible than those associated with generativism.

This is a continuing debate, which Ladd describes as a 'deadlock', albeit one which he goes on to attempt to break.[63] However, it is a debate which, from the point of view of criticism, is of less importance than the reorientation of phonology towards pragmatic aspects of speech behaviour that underlies it. Both 'radical' and 'structural' approaches accept the premise that speakers have a significant role to play in accent assignment, while even phonologists closely linked to the generativist tradition are now diffident about the status of their predictive rules.[64] Structural FTA has substituted for the concept of normal stress that of *broad focus*, described by Cruttenden as follows:

> Basically, the sorts of intonation-groups which have broad focus can be thought of as 'all-new' or 'out-of-the-blue', or said in response to 'What happened?'; although this question 'What happened?' is only relevant to narratives.[65]

---

[63]Ladd, *Intonational Phonology*, p. 167.

[64]E.g. Bruce Hayes, *Metrical Stress Theory: Principles and Case Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 369.

[65]Cruttenden, p. 74. For Bolinger's 'radical' FTA, on the other hand, *all* utterances are focus-marked. He states in *Intonation and its Uses* that '[i]f there is neutral speech, it is speech in which emotion has been not eliminated but tamed' (p. 69), implying that this taming is, in itself, an emotional state.

Although broad focus is, like normal stress, a strategy designed to enable the discussion of accentual patterns thought to be relatively 'neutral', this definition makes the difference between the two concepts clear: where broad focus is defined by pragmatic circumstances thought to be particularly exemplary, normal stress relied on the wholesale evacuation of the pragmatic from the linguistic.[66]

The implications for literary prosody of the dethronement of normal stress have rarely, if ever, been directly addressed.[67] I believe that they are extremely positive, and should enable the development of a genuinely flexible model for the prediction of poetic sound, particularly in a nonmetrical context. In one way, they present a considerable challenge. A phonology that accepts that speakers' communicative intentions have a pervasive influence on performance can no longer supply the context-free definitions of stress and intonation which underlie the kinds of readings discussed above, and thus raises with some force the question of the legitimacy of critical predictions. The critic who wishes to scan poems for syllabic prominences can no longer avoid paying attention to the pragmatics of performance. S/he is perfectly free to seek a pattern that accords with the 'broad-focus' conditions described by Cruttenden and Ladd, but this must be a positive choice, and one supported by pragmatic justification: the complex affective and semantic effects set up by poetic language may make the choice of an 'out-of-the-blue' intonation problematic, and harder to justify as each line goes by. The case could be made that an 'out-of-the-blue' intonation is preferable to ones more

---

[66]D. Robert Ladd's discussion of broad focus occurs, significantly, in a section of *Intonational Phonology* entitled 'Are we just re-inventing "normal stress"?'; its emphasis on the impossibility of contextlessness emphasises what Ladd calls 'an important change of orientation from the structuralist and early generative view' (p. 198).

[67]Holder, p. 199, notes that an acceptance of Bolinger's work 'would radically undermine orthodox scansion', but does not explore the possibility. His own approach is based on normal stress (e.g. p. 129).

expressive of focus, since (the argument might run) it leaves the reader freer to place his or her own interpretation on the poem; but, again, this case would need to be argued, and cannot legitimately be appealed to as the methodological default. It is no longer sufficient simply to assert that a poem 'actually goes like this'.

In a sense, a pragmatised linguistics returns free-verse criticism to the point where many readers of poetry begin: concerned to discover how a poem will sound when read aloud, and lacking a phonological theory that could circumvent the challenges and pleasures of experiment and rehearsal. Indeed, Focus-to-Accent might be said to free criticism from an excess of deference towards the linguistic sciences. If phonology must attend to questions of context, interpretation and expression in describing the accentual patterns of utterances, then it enters upon criticism's own terrain; the mini-narratives quoted above are nothing if not literary.

However, the advantages to criticism of Focus-to-Accent theory are more extensive than this. Bolinger's mini-narratives, in particular, constitute an impressive body of reflection on the motivations of speech behaviour, and one with a strong interest in expressive nuance.[68] This is one of the examples given in 'Accent Is Predictable [...]':

> The power of a figure of speech is [...] seen in the sentence *If you try to avoid any shield at all* [in riding a motorcycle], *the force of the rain is like having sánd thrown in your face*, where *sánd* is the point of the simile and everything after it is de-accented.[69]

---

[68]Such an interest was largely absent from other phonologies; one work thanked its informants for 'pronouncing long (and boring) lists of sentences for us' (A. Berman and M. Szamosi, 'Observations on Sentential Stress', *Language*, 48 (1972), 304-28 (p. 304); quoted in Anna Fuchs, '"Deaccenting" and "Default Accent"', in *Intonation, Accent and Rhythm: Studies in Discourse Phonology*, ed. by Dafydd Gibbon and Helmut Richter (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984), 134-64 (p. 135). Linguists' reliance on single sentences read aloud, which lack any context that might make them meaningful, may help to explain the emergence of 'normal stress'. See David Brazil, 'The Intonation of Sentences Read Aloud', in Gibbon and Richter, 46-66.

[69]Bolinger, 'Accent Is Predictable', p. 639.

This is notable, not only for its interest in the ways in which a relatively poetic kind of 'focus' becomes 'accent', but also in its introduction of the idea that items which in any rule-based phonology would be marked as 'stressed' can, on pragmatic grounds, be considered 'de-accented'. This suggestion is one that I have found very helpful. Moreover, the fact that phonology can no longer define a sentence's 'stress contour' constitutes an encouragement to consider the full range of available phonetic patterning. Although phonology cannot provide theory-neutral notations for poetry criticism, therefore, the shifts within its methodology may have brought it to a stage where it can be a useful resource for prediction.

3 PERFORMANCE IN CONTEXT: RESOURCES

In placing performance at the centre of its analysis, the Focus-to-Accent approach to speech behaviour has significant consequences for prosodic criticism. As noted above, little attention is traditionally paid within prosody to the utterances of individual speakers; such attention is inessential in studies of metrical poetry, and largely excluded from any that appeals to a rule-driven phonology. In an analytical environment where phonological rules cannot be appealed to, and where the object of analysis lacks the influence of metre, there is little choice but to seek an acceptable way of integrating performance into critical methods.

This realisation is not, of course, unprecedented; attention to Focus-to-Accent theory is not necessary for the variability of nonmetrical performance to be perceived. In the work of Derek Attridge, for example, a noticeable contrast exists between the way in which performance is largely excluded from general characterisations of scansion - while scansion may be used 'to prescribe or record particular ways of reading a line', its fundamental purpose, as for Wimsatt and Beardsley, is 'to reveal

the metrical structure that underlies *any* satisfactory performance' - and the caution with which some nonmetrical scansions are introduced:

> The scansions given are not intended to be complete or definitive; in particular, I have often shown only one metrical realisation where an indefinite stress implying a range of possibilities would have been more accurate[70]

A consequence of this dual approach is the acknowledgement, noted in Chapter 1, that aspects of nonmetrical scansion may be 'highly subjective'.

In many cases, it is difficult to imagine how such caution may be avoided. However, the recourse to subjectivity, as a critical category, poses certain problems. It may, depending on the authority of the individual prosodist, limit the interest of the scansions produced; it may restrict the different styles that can be described well to those in which he or she can recognise forms that are already familiar. More fundamentally, it implies that influences on speech behaviour are polarised between those that are linguistically given, and may be investigated, and those that are undescribable on the grounds of subjectivity. It is on the grounds of such a polarisation that the 'poem as object' approach excludes performance from scansion, although a subjectivism that is no more constructive can just as easily result.[72]

Such a polarisation fails to account for the many influences on performance which neither 'objective' nor 'subjective' categories of analysis represent adequately. Prosodic aspects of speech behaviour are, for example, very much part of dialect; the different forms of English spoken by American and British speakers, or within different regional dialects, are characterised by rhythmic and intonational particularities. A speaker's perception of his or her activity type will also have an influence

---

[70]*REP*, p. 217, p. 316.

[72]Addison, p. 671, suggests that prosody consider 'the mood of the moment'.

on behaviour: the differences between spontaneous speech and reading aloud, or between reading prose and reading poetry, are significant. Finally, the response to nonmetrical poetry is in some respects purely conventional - most importantly, in the widespread association of linebreak with some form of pause. Such influences are variably observed - as the comparison of Creeley with Williams illustrates - but are not, for all that, simply subjective; a prosody that treats them as such may fail to account for them adequately.[73]

Accounting for these influences on speech behaviour in general, and poetry-reading in particular, requires not simply that performance be integrated into prosody, but that it be given a degree of contextualisation. The extent to which this is attempted will depend, in part, on the needs of the criticism which prosody seeks to serve. However, it will also depend on the resources that may make such contextualisation possible. Two that may be of particular use are corpus linguistics and literary history.

A) CORPUS LINGUISTICS: THE INDIVIDUAL AS GROUP MEMBER

Corpus-based research into language proceeds by gathering large samples of natural language, which are then analysed - most usually through the use of computers - in order to describe and account for patterns of usage that may emerge from the data. Such a method is therefore more empirical than much of the phonology discussed so far.[74] Corpus research has a long

---

[73]This criticism might be applicable to Attridge's 'Poetry Unbound'. Attridge includes a reading of Williams's 'Poem' ('The rose fades') that places 'slight vocal signals' at the end of each line (p. 358), but in a discussion of Geoffrey Hill's 'September Song' suggests that 'this is poetry that resists the voice [...] [I]t is only on the page that the words occur in lines' (p. 369). It is unclear if a real performative difference is being described, and, if so, on what grounds.

[74]The differences of method, and the claims of corpus linguistics to theoretical status, are discussed in Geoffrey Leech, 'Corpora and Theories of Linguistic Performance', in *Directions in Corpus Linguistics*, ed. by Jan Svartvik, Trends in Linguistics Studies and Monographs 65 (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992), pp. 105-122.

history, but fell out of use during the later 1960s and 1970s. It returned to favour during the 1980s, as interest grew in exploring language through paradigms other than that of generativism, and as computer technology became available that enabled the sophisticated analysis of extremely large samples of text.[75]

Although many corpora are based on written sources, some are specifically concerned with speech. Two of those currently available - the London-Lund Corpus (LLC) and the Spoken English Corpus (SEC) - have been prosodically transcribed.[76] Trained phoneticians have listened to the recordings of speech which form the basis of the corpus, and have notated their transcriptions in such a way that the distribution of intonational features such as intonation-group boundary, tonal movements and pitch accents can be described. This is a sample, taken from the SEC, of news commentary:

> || on ·each o↗ccasion | an a¯ppropriate `slogan was ↘shouted || ¯each _time | Ceau`sescu | was the ↘first ·word of the ↘slogan ||[77]

The different marks describe, for example, a prominent but not pitch-prominent syllable (·), and major and minor intonation-group boundaries (|, ||); others denote different kinds of tonal movement. The corpora include thousands of such prosodically annotated examples; the SEC contains over 50,000 words, and the LLC 170,000.[78]

---

[75]On the history and development of corpus linguistics, see Graeme Kennedy, *An Introduction to Corpus Linguistics* (London: Longman, 1998), pp. 13-60; on its relationship to Chomskyan theory, see Leech, 'Corpora', and Tony McEnery and Andrew Wilson, *Corpus Linguistics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 4-16.

[76]*A Corpus of English Conversation*, ed. by Jan Svartvik and Randolph Quirk, Lund Studies in English 56 (Lund: Gleerup, 1980); *A Corpus of Formal British English Speech: The Lancaster/IBM Spoken English Corpus*, ed. by Gerry Knowles, Briony Williams and Lita Taylor (London: Longman, 1996).

[77]Knowles, Williams and Taylor, p. 47.

[78]Briony Williams, 'The Status of Corpora as Linguistic Data', in Knowles, Wichmann and Alderson, pp. 3-19 (p. 16).

The value of these transcriptions lies in the analyses that can be made of them, in particular any which reveal an association of individual features with particular grammatical or pragmatic contexts. Such findings improve understanding of the intonational features of English; they may also help computer software developers in the development of speech-synthesis programs.[79]

They may also have applications within poetry criticism. Such applications are, it can be suggested, of two sorts. The first makes use of the general findings and associations just described. One piece of work on the SEC, for example, suggests ways of improving the distinction between lexical and functional items for the purposes of accent placement.[80] This distinction is a mainstay of prosody handbooks, but its inadequacies have long been recognised; a more refined model would make scansions that sought to reflect typical usage more capable of doing so. Another piece of research, this time based on the LLC, describes tendencies in the distribution of intonation groups.[81] The potential value of these units to the discussion of poetic sound, and especially of linebreak, was discussed above; an understanding of their association with particular grammatical structures is thus very helpful. Furthermore, as corpus studies become more widespread, and a greater range of sources are examined, comparative analysis across dialects should become possible. A second type of application, meanwhile, draws on the uses made of corpora in the investigation of prosodic style: the intonational behaviour that is associated with particular activities and contexts. It is widely recognised, for

---

[79]The SEC, for example, was funded by IBM. The uses of prosodic transcription are set out in Williams, p. 7.

[80]Gerry Knowles, 'From Text Structure to Prosodic Structure', in Knowles, Wichmann and Alderson, pp. 146-167.

[81]Bengt Altenberg, *Prosodic Patterns in Spoken English: Studies in the Correlation between Prosody and Grammar for Text-to-speech Conversion* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1987), pp. 46-124.

example, that there exists a 'poetry-reading' style; analysis of recitations, although so far only attempted to a very limited extent, enables some of the characteristics of that style to be determined.

These resources lend themselves to several potential uses. They may be used to corroborate working scansions of nonmetrical poems. If the prosodist's own dialect is one of which corpus studies have been made, his or her prominence and tone assignments can be compared against the typical behaviour of other speakers. It is unlikely that the scansion produced will be judged defective; the prosodist is as conversant with typical usage as anyone else. Nonetheless, the comparison will enable the naturalness of particular choices to be assessed, and a distinction drawn between the points at which the notated performance is predictable on the basis of the text alone, and those at which it may depend on a particular delivery style.

Corpora can also help prosody to imagine the performance choices of other groups of speakers, including those defined by dialect. The prosodic response to free verse has sometimes foundered on alleged distinctions between American and British speech patterns. The poetry of William Carlos Williams, for example, remained controversial in the United Kingdom for much longer than in the United States. His defenders asserted a British failure to 'hear' American intonations; his detractors, the irrelevance of those intonations to the underlying form of the poetry.[82] The debate was never resolved, since the lack of an appropriate prosodic contribution made its proper continuation impossible; corpus studies might enable such debates to be brought to a meaningful conclusion.[83]

---

[82]See Donald Davie, 'Postscript' to 'Two Ways Out of Whitman', in *The Poet in the Imaginary Museum: Essays of Two Decades*, ed. by Barry Alpert (Manchester: Carcanet, 1977), pp. 132-136.

[83]This potential also exists within comparative studies of British dialects. For example, it was long Basil Bunting's contention that speakers of Received Pronunciation had difficulty appreciating the form of his work (Stefan Hawlin, 'Bunting's Northumbrian

Finally, the techniques of corpus studies might be applied to samples of recorded readings, in order to investigate readers' responses to specific cues. This approach has been suggested by the phonetician and prosodist Tom Barney.[84]

B) LITERARY HISTORY: CONVENTIONS AND PRAGMATIC CHANGE

While corpus studies can describe general patterns of speech behaviour, and even characterise aspects of the prosodic style associated with poetry-reading, there are influences on performance in respect of which they are unlikely to offer help. These are the pragmatic factors to which individual readers, or small groups of readers, may respond, and which can have a significant effect on the performance of a poem. Linebreak, and the conventions associated with it, is one example of such a factor - but many others can be cited.

These factors include, for example, the influence of a given metre at a particular time, and thus its potential as a poem's 'ghost metre'; a poet's reputation as predominantly metrical or nonmetrical, and the consequent expectations of readers in this respect; the popularity of particular musical or song forms; the degree of difference commonly observed between 'poetry-reading style' and the intonation of everyday conversation; and prevailing assumptions about the nature of poetic form. These influences, whose effect will vary among different readerships, may cause wide variation in the performance of a single text. The reception of H.D.'s 'Oread' is illustrative of this. For Amy Lowell, writing in 1918, the poem

---

Tongue: Against the Monument of the Centre', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 25 (1995), 103-113); corpus studies may enable the nature of that difficulty - perhaps based in the different uses of the high rising contour made by Northern and Southern dialects - to be better appreciated.

[84]Barney, 'A Response', p. 51.

was to be performed as a regular succession of metrical beats; for Richard Bradford, in 1993, it was an early example of visual form.[85] Each reading reflects, and seems very likely to have been influenced by, the critical priorities of its day.

In assessing such influences, the most helpful resources are likely to be those of literary history, including period studies and original documents. References to the songs or poems popular at a given time, or the prevailing view of linebreak, may be prosodically significant; even more helpful are sound recordings, particularly those of poetry readings. A study devoted to large samples of recorded readings has never, to my knowledge, been made, although such a project would provide important evidence of developments in reading style. Nonetheless, smaller studies, based on commercial recordings and archive material, can be undertaken whenever necessary. Recordings grouped by such features as year, location, or literary affiliations - where, as is most often the case, the reader who has been recorded is himself or herself a poet - might give useful evidence of typical patterns of behaviour, and the status of particular conventions among different readerships.

Such findings will assist any criticism that seeks to establish the likely performance of a text in a given set of circumstances, or to reconstruct the performance preferences of particular readerships. Nonmetrical poetry is particularly vulnerable to changes in reading style, as well as - given the importance of linebreak to many nonmetrical styles - in performative convention. This last can be illustrated by the work of Robert Creeley. Creeley writes short-lined poetry, with frequent enjambment, yet in performance, as commentators have noted and as recordings reveal, pauses

---

[85]Lowell, 'The Rhythms of Free Verse', p. 53; Bradford, *The Look of It*, pp. 9-10.

without fail at the end of each line.[86] Such pauses must be assumed to play an important role in his poetry. However, the link between linebreak and pause is, as noted above, largely conventional; many contemporary poets who employ the short-line, run-on style, such as May Swenson, as well as older poets such as Williams, give no sense in their own readings that linebreaks should cue pause. Given this fact, a scansion that simply assumes a pausal function for Creeley's linebreaks will be less accurate than one which engages with the pragmatic factors that make, or have made, that function possible. These may include the popularity, at the time of Creeley's first fame, of breath-based theories of prosody among the Beat and Black Mountain writers and their readers, and the subsequent gain in stature which enabled Creeley to publish a *Collected Poems* (1982), and to add a prefatory note explaining the rhythmic function of his lines.[87] A reader who is exposed to such pragmatic influences is likely to respond to these poems differently from one who is not; its need for such influences may or may not be found a positive aspect of Creeley's work, but a prosody that takes explicit account of them is much better placed to describe its place and nature.

This method of appealing to historical context, including sound recordings, differs from others which have been suggested.[88] Recordings of poets reading their own work are sometimes used as definitive guides to scansion; Antony Easthope's *Poetry as Discourse* (1983) contains the theoretical expression of this practice in its suggestion that authorial recordings be considered 'part of the "canonical" text'.[89] Ian Pople's

---

[86]Thom Gunn, 'Small Persistent Difficulties', in *Robert Creeley's Life and Work: A Sense of Increment*, ed. by John Wilson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987), pp. 401-409 (p. 406).

[87]Robert Creeley, 'Preparatory Note', *The Collected Poems of Robert Creeley, 1945-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. x.

[88]It is close, however, to the corpus-based approach proposed by Barney.

[89]Easthope, p. 158

recent discussion of Basil Bunting is a study that follows this approach and, indeed, cites Easthope as its authority.[90] However, both proposal and method entail difficulties. Some of these are relatively minor, such as the consideration that poets are not necessarily good performers before a microphone.[91] More important is the fact that such an approach does not account for more than a small proportion of a poem's passage through the world. A poem has many readers, and some of the most interesting questions thrown up by poetic form, particularly where that form seeks to innovate in some way, concern the responses which different readers will bring to it; to concentrate on authorial performance alone reduces prosodic criticism to the study of intentions. Establishing these intentions can, of course, be interesting in it own right, but will rarely be the only goal of prosodic criticism.[92]

4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined questions of notation and prediction in predominantly linguistic terms; finding phonetics preferable to phonology as a source of notations, and describing phonological theories, and some empirical findings, that may be helpful to performance prediction. The importance of conventional and pragmatic influences on performance has also been asserted, and ways suggested in which changes in these influences may be appreciated.

Taken together, a set of resources has been suggested that can help trace a poem's path from page to speech, and contribute to the accurate

---

[90]Pople, p. 23.
[91]Helen Roach, *Spoken Records*, 3rd edn (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1970), p. 51.
[92]The most interesting study to be based on authorial recordings is probably Stefan Hawlin, 'Eliot Reads *The Waste Land*: Text and Recording', *MLR*, 87 (1992), 545-54. Hawlin considers the extent to which Eliot's reading of his own poem is 'legislated by the text' (p. 550), and the performative consequences of typography and punctuation.

description of its sound. Approaches to prosody that take account of these resources in the ways suggested may put them to many different uses. The attempt can be made to understand the performative habits of particular audiences - perhaps those contemporary with a poem's publication. Alternatively, a performance may be determined on the basis of aesthetic or other critical priorities, and these resources used merely as a guide to the likelihood of that performance. Appropriate resources will not always be available, and a scansion may not find empirical justification. Nevertheless, the fact that some such resources do exist means that predictive difficulties can be explained in practical, rather than epistemological terms: doubts can be ascribed to an inadequacy of resources, or to persistent ambiguities in the text itself. It is unlikely that the distinction between 'objective' and 'subjective' scansions can be dispensed with altogether, but the approach set out in this chapter may permit it to be appealed to less often, and less absolutely.

Part Two:
Tools

Chapter 3
Rhythm

In this part of the thesis, a set of descriptive tools is described which may permit the approaches to prosody set out in Chapter 2 to be put into practice. The tools are of two sorts: notations with which the sounds of nonmetrical poetry may be transcribed, and predictive mechanisms by which those sounds may be associated with written texts.

This chapter sets out the tools that may be needed in describing poetic rhythm. Of *rhythm*'s many meanings, two are particularly important to prosody. One is psychological, and refers to the mind's inference of binary patterns of beats and offbeats from complex phenomenal cues; in discussions of poetry, these processes are principally associated with metre. Another is linguistic, and refers to the prominence patterns found in utterances. In nonmetrical poetry, the detail of these patterns may have a role to play in the listener's construction of poetic form.

This chapter considers both kinds of rhythm, as well as the links between them. The first section describes the range of notations that may be needed if scansion is to convey the phonetic distinctions that may be drawn between different kinds of syllabic prominence. It also describes the different kinds of metrical beat and offbeat proposed in Derek Attridge's *The Rhythms of English Poetry*. Subsequent sections consider the prediction of both prominences and beats. A description of the tendencies in prominence placement observed by corpus studies, and of the metrical rules set out by Attridge, is followed by consideration of how a poem's rhythm may vary according to genre and performance style, and through the influence of certain other pragmatic factors.

1 RHYTHMIC FEATURES: NATURE AND REPRESENTATION

A) ACCENTED SYLLABLES

In poetry, as in everyday speech, the perception of syllabic prominence is most frequently cued by a pitch movement.[1] For example, two of the many different ways in which the sentence *Are you going away?* may be uttered are the following:

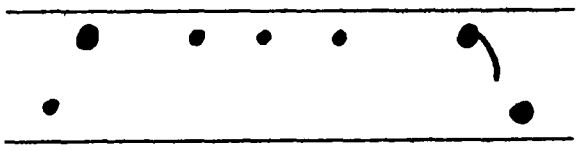
Are you going away?

Are you going away?

These pitch movements have an intonational role to play, contributing to the 'tune' of the utterance and potentially conveying information to the listener about the speaker's attitude to his words.[2] At the same time, however, they will cause the syllable *-way* to be perceived as more prominent than its neighbours - in traditional terms, as 'stressed'.

Prominences cued by pitch are usually referred to as *accents*, and the syllables on which they fall as *accented*, and this practice will be adopted in this thesis.[3] Accents can be cued by pitch movements down or up to an accented syllable - as in the above examples - or down or up from it. This can create ambiguity: in a sentence such as:

He ought to have asked me first



---

[1]John Clark and Colin Yallop, *An Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p. 280; Crystal, 'Intonation and Metrical Theory', p. 121; Prudence Byers, 'A Formula for Poetic Intonation', *Poetics*, 8 (1979), 367-380.

[2]See Chapter 4, below.

[3]Dwight Bolinger, 'A Theory of Pitch Accent in English', *Word*, 14 (1958), 109-49; Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 13.

listeners cannot deduce from the opening pitch movement alone whether *He* or *ought* is accented. In some such cases, the correct accent placement is signalled by one of the other available prominence-lending features, such as variation in duration or loudness; in others, the listener must appeal to his or her familiarity with typical speech patterns, and the knowledge that verbs are typically accented more frequently than pronouns.[4]

This double role played by pitch accent requires a double notation, depending on whether it is rhythm or intonation that is being described. This can be illustrated with reference to the opening lines of William Carlos Williams's 'Tract' (1917):

> I will teach you my townspeople
> how to perform a funeral.[5]

It is likely that at least four of the syllables in these lines will be made prominent by a pitch movement. If, within discussion of such lines, the direction of these movements is thought to be of interest, then the intonational marks described in Chapter 4 will be used. If commentary is centred on rhythm, with the pitch accents of interest only as creators of syllabic prominence, then they can be notated more simply, using bold type:

> I will **teach** you my **town**speople
> **how** to perform a f**u**neral.

This is the practice that will be adopted in the remainder of this thesis.

---

[4]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, pp. 40-41; see also Chapter 2, above.
[5]William Carlos Williams, *Collected Poems*, ed. by A. Walton Litz and Christopher MacGowan, 2 vols (Manchester: Carcanet, 1987-88; repr. London: Paladin, 1991), I, 72.

B) NUCLEAR ACCENTS

Nuclear accents are not different in kind from pitch accents, but form a subsection of that category: they may be defined as the most prominent of the pitch accents within an intonation group. That the listener will always find one accent particularly prominent is a long-held assumption among writers on intonation, although different terms have been used; for Ladefoged and Halliday, the most prominent accent is the *tonic syllable*, for Pike, it is the *primary contour*; while Bolinger proposes the term *rhematic accent*.[6] However, the most widely used term is *nucleus*, first proposed in 1922.[7] Despite its association with generative phonology, *nucleus* has the advantages of brevity and distinctiveness, and will be used in this thesis.

The notation used will be the placing of the nuclear syllable in upper case:

> i will tEAch you / my tOwnspeople /
> how to perform a fUneral. /

To avoid ambiguity in scansions that notate nuclei, other upper-case characters must, as here, be suppressed.

C) UNACCENTED SYLLABLES

The above notation of Williams's lines is not a complete account of the different prominences that may be perceived in them. Among those syllables which lack a pitch movement, *I* is likely to seem more prominent than *will*, and the first syllable of *perform* less prominent than the second.

---

[6]Peter Ladefoged, *A Course in Phonetics*, 3rd edn (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1993) p. 109; M.A.K. Halliday, *Intonation and Grammar in British English* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), p. 13; Pike, p. vi; Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p. 49.
[7]Harold E. Palmer, *English Intonation with Systematic Exercises* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1922), p. 7.

Such distinctions can arise for several different reasons, including variations in intensity and duration, and a distinction between full and reduced vowels. Furthermore, listeners' preference for regular rhythmic sequences means that prominences may be perceived even in the absence of phonetic cues. These factors are considered in section 2c, below, where non-pitch prominence assignment is discussed. It is likely that listeners perceive only one distinction among unaccented syllables - those which are prominent, and those which are not - and do not distinguish between the cues responsible. Only one additional notation is therefore necessary.[8]

The practice of this thesis will be to underline syllables on which non-pitch prominences are perceived, with no particular causative mechanism implied. A full rhythmic notation of Williams's lines, on the performance so far adopted, will therefore be as follows:

i will tEAch you / my tOwnspeople /
how to perform a fUneral. /

D) BEATS

Many passages of nonmetrical poetry approach the rhythmic regularity of metred verse; in such cases, the *beat*, the term on which the model of metre used in this thesis relies, is an important descriptive tool. The beat is not a kind of syllabic prominence, and nor does it supplant those defined, as above, by their auditory characteristics. In metrical language, sequences of more and less prominent syllables continue to be perceived as such, but the particular pattern into which they fall permits the listener to infer from them the presence of a metre. They are at the same time *perceived* as more and less prominent syllables, with defined phonetic characteristics, and

---

[8]A similar approach is taken by the transcribers of the SEC.

interpreted as beats; the two responses co-exist within the listener's response to the utterance.

As noted in Chapter 1, *REP* describes metrical language through a sequence of *B*s placed beneath the syllables with which beats are associated, and of *o*s beneath those associated with offbeats, or weaker beats.[9] In this, their simplest form, the *REP* notations imply a direct correlation between the language of the poem - which Attridge describes using a simplified phonology - and the metrical pattern. A *B*, if left without further annotation, implies that the syllable associated with the beat is stressed, or stressable.[10] An offbeat notated with an unadorned *o* is realised by an unstressed syllable, while *ŏ* denotes an offbeat realised by two unstressed syllables together, a *double offbeat*. The following lines exemplify these relationships:

(1) By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed[11]
o B o B o B o B o B

(2) Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease
B ŏ B o B o B o B

The pentameter embodies a five-beat *underlying rhythm*, one of the two which Attridge sees as central to English verse. The more common, and most persuasive, is the four-beat, found in nursery rhyme, ballad and song; the five-beat, less easily combined into stanzas and impossible to break down into two equal halves, elicits a weaker rhythmic response, and is thus particularly suitable to contexts in which a fidelity to the rhythms of natural speech is sought.

---

[9]*Poetic Rhythm* proposes different symbols; the *REP* set is preferred in this thesis.
[10]Since Attridge's categories of *stressed* and *unstressed* are phonological, the application of these notations within a phonetically-based model requires a slight adjustment of definitions. Promotion must be said to apply to a *nonprominent* syllable, and demotion to a *prominent* one.
[11]Scansions 1-5 from *REP*, pp. 205-206; quotations from Shakespeare's *Sonnets*.

Metrical poetry does not always enact a straightforward relationship between language and rhythm, and *REP* supplies further notations to describe the forms which this relationship may take. In (3), the nonstress *is* realises a beat; *REP* calls such cases *promotions*, and denotes them by the mark $\bar{B}$:

(3) And often is his gold complexion dimmed
o B o $\bar{B}$ o B o B o B

In (4), the syllable *quick*, although likely to be prominent, realises an offbeat; this is an example of demotion, notated as $\acute{o}$:

(4) Nor Mars his sword, nor war's quick fire shall burn
o B o B o B $\acute{o}$ B o B

In neither of these cases is a change in the prominence of the promoted or demoted syllable implied; the metrical pattern is strong enough to be perceived despite the lack of an immediate linguistic cue. In (5), no unstressed syllable separates the second and third beats:

(5) As testy sick men when their deaths be near
o B o B $\hat{o}$ B $\breve{o}$ B o B

Since beats and offbeats are defined by their alternation, lines such as this rely on the listener's perception of an *implied offbeat* between the two prominent syllables, represented by the sign $\hat{o}$; no special pronunciation, bar careful timing, is needed for the metre to be perceived. Finally, a strong underlying rhythm may cause beats to be perceived even after a line has finished; these are *unrealised beats*, denoted with the symbol *[B]*:

My heart is at rest within my breast
B B B B

And everything else is still.[12]
B B B [B]

REP makes one more distinction which must be noted. In most metrical contexts, beats are of fairly equal strength. There is, however, a tendency among listeners to groups of four beats to feel that the first and third beats in groups of four are stronger than the second and fourth. This phenomenon is known as *dipodism*, and, where it is felt to be present, *REP* denotes the weaker beats with a lower-case *b*:

A merry road, a mazy road, and such as we did tread
B b B b B b B
The night we went to Birmingham by way of Beachy Head.[13]
B b B b B b B

With these marks, and a few others, the notations of *REP* describe metrical patterns of beats and offbeats, and imply certain relationships between that pattern and the linguistic material of the poem; other notations describe and classify metres and stanzaic forms.[14] As Attridge's scansions of Eliot show, these marks can be used as effectively in a predominantly nonmetrical context, where lines of metre are felt to be present, as in a wholly metrical one.[15] Prominence notations may continue to be used, if precision in their description is important; if the metre alone is under discussion, they can be omitted.

---

[12]Blake, 'Nurse's Song'; *REP*, p. 99. The notion of *unrealised beat* permits a line such as the second of these to be considered as the manifestation of an underlying four-beat rhythm, despite having only three prominent syllables.
[13]Chesterton, 'The Rolling English Road'; *REP*, p. 117.
[14]A complete list is given in the Appendix.
[15]See Chapter 1, above.

2 PREDICTION OF RHYTHMIC FEATURES

The model of prediction followed in this section and the next follows the principles proposed in Chapter 2. It describes the tendencies in accent assignment that have been observed by recent corpus studies, and the characteristic styles associated with reading and speaking, reading, and poetry-reading. It also considers historical and dialectal influences on rhythm.

A proviso must be made concerning the use of the corpus material. Several existing corpuses, including the SEC, have been developed and studied with a view to enhancing computer speech synthesis software.[16] In consequence, their findings are sometimes expressed in the form of algorithms. Such algorithms are, in their original form, of little use to criticism, since they simply seek to generate a performance which is credible as the output of a linguistically competent native speaker. Instead, they will be appealed to selectively, where they describe tendencies that have hitherto gone unremarked.

A further proviso concerns the relationship between the studies cited, which are generalising, and the potential of poetic language to create unexpected and context-dependent aesthetic effects. Understanding of a poem's use of form may sometimes require a repeated and varied engagement with its reading, rehearsal and interpretation. In such circumstances, tendencies that are widespread in everyday speech may need to be departed from; this departure may also come to have its own significance.

---

[16]Knowles, Williams and Taylor, p. 1

A) PITCH-ACCENT ASSIGNMENT

i) Tendencies observed by corpus studies

Although every English word has a stress pattern, identified with the prominence relations found in the word's citation form, these relations are not necessarily perceptible in connected speech.[17]

Prosodic handbooks sometimes suggest two principal aids to the prediction of syllabic prominence. The simpler is the distinction between compound and non-compound pairs, with the second element of compound nouns typically non-prominent; a well-known example is the distinction between *the White House* and *the white house*.[18] This contrast is well founded. The more complex, and that which aims at a wider utility, is the distinction between 'open-class' and 'closed-class', 'content' and 'function', or 'lexical' and 'grammatical' items:

(a) CLOSED CLASSES
preposition - *of, at, in, without, in spite of*
pronoun - *he, they, anybody, one, which*
determiner - *the, a, that, every, some*
conjunction - *and, that, when, although*
modal verb - *can, must, will, could*
primary verb - *be, have, do*

(b) OPEN CLASSES
noun - *John, room, answer, play*
adjective - *happy, steady, new, large, round*
full verb - *search, grow, play*
adverb - *steadily, completely, really*[19]

Both linguists and prosodists have noted that the lexically stressed syllables of open-class items are typically prominent in connected speech, while

---

[17]The more prominent syllables in such patterns are said to carry *lexical stress*. All monosyllables may be considered to have lexical stress, since, like the prominent syllables of polysyllabic words, they are accented in their citation form. For example: 'Which is your favourite preposition?' - '***Of***.'

[18]A compound noun is defined as a lexical unit consisting of more than one base and functioning both grammatically and semantically as a single word: Randolph Quirk and others, *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (London: Longman, 1985), p. 1567.

[19]Quirk and others, *Comprehensive Grammar*, p. 67.

those of closed-class items are not.[20] The application of this distinction to accent prediction is slightly problematic, since it is not designed for such a task: it distinguishes only between more and less prominent syllables, and not between different kinds of prominence. Nevertheless, it may still constitute a useful tool.

The work of the SEC researchers supports the compound / non-compound distinction as a basis for accent assignment. It also suggests that a phonetics-based approach can usefully accommodate a predictive categorisation similar to the distinction between lexical and grammatical items, but that syntactic considerations are not the best grounds on which to make it. Furthermore, its assignment is merely one step in a set of analytic and predictive procedures which examine the combination of words, as well as their nature.

a) Refinements to the lexical / grammatical distinction

According to Gerry Knowles, it had originally been intended to use the lexical / grammatical distinction in the speech synthesis algorithm based on the SEC.[21] However, it became clear that to base prominence assignment on this distinction would give inaccurate results in certain cases. In consequence, a new classification was developed, based on the *default accentual status* of different word types. This status could be A, meaning that the word is typically accented; S, meaning that it is typically made prominent by non-pitch means; U, which describes items whose main vowel remains unreduced; W, where it is reduced, or weak.

---

[20]E.g. Geoffrey Leech, *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (London: Longmans, 1969), p. 107; Attridge, *Poetic Rhythm,* pp. 27-31. Altenberg (p. 126) describes this as the 'traditional approach [...] to stress distribution'.

[21]Gerry Knowles, 'From Text Structure to Prosodic Structure', in Knowles, Wichmann and Alderson, pp. 146-67 (p. 155-56).

The link between lexical items and accent is retained in this classification: most receive the status A. However, there are two categories which Knowles reassigns to status S, implying that they will not be accented. One is the category of titles: although they are nouns, words such as *Mister*, *Dame*, *Professor* are typically unaccented. Another is of wider consequence; it is suggested that verbs, including main verbs, tend not to be accented.

b) Suppression of intermediate accents

Accents that may attach to individual items are frequently suppressed when combined in connected speech, a tendency that is particularly visible when several accentable items are contained in a single intonation group.

The accents that are most readily suppressed in connected speech are those which fall in the middle of groups of three or more. The following examples are given by Knowles:

the **a**verage **p**ortfolio	—>	the **a**verage portf**o**lio
BBC	—>	**BBC**
BBC news	—>	**BBC** news
Tw**o** d**a**ys bef**o**re they were to l**ea**ve	—>	Tw**o** days before they were to l**ea**ve[22]

Presented as such, the rule is much simplified. Knowles's model generates tone groups and accentual patterns at the same time; furthermore, distinctions are drawn between the likely deaccentability of initial accents (onsets) and nuclei, while items' respective default accentual statuses also come into play. *Holding white flags* is contrasted, for example with *peering over the dashboard*, whereby verb *holding* is deemed subordinate to adjective *white*, but verb *peering* dominates preposition *over*. This approach cannot easily be translated out of its original context, but the

---

[22]Knowles. 'From Text Structure', pp. 160-61.

statement of the general tendency to suppress intermediate accents remains valuable.[23]

ii) The role of focus

Knowles suggests that the principal limitation of his model is its inability to 'read the speaker's mind', with the result 'that the wrong words are sometimes accented, or perhaps just too many words are accented.'[24] As Chapter 2 noted, the link between 'the speaker's mind' and accent placement is achieved via *focus*: the speaker's decisions as to the most interesting or informative parts of his or her utterance. Perhaps unsurprisingly, no systematic studies of the links between speaker-determined focus and accent exist.[25] In place of such a study, commentators have had to restrict themselves to suggesting possible typologies for these different relationships.[26] These typologies are almost certainly less empirically solid than the kind of statistical observations alluded to so far, but they are nonetheless helpful. That which is appealed to in this section is drawn from the work of Dwight Bolinger.

a) Deaccenting

When focus is placed on one item in a sentence or sentence domain, accents which might have been assigned to other items are likely to be suppressed. This removal of accents is one of the most significant

---

[23]Knowles's earlier *Patterns of Spoken English* (London: Longman, 1987) uses the term 'Intermediate Accent Rule' (p. 124). A similar tendency is assumed in Gussenhoven, 'The English Rhythm Rule', pp. 17-20.
[24]Knowles, 'From Text Structure', pp. 165, 166.
[25]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 146.
[26]E.g. Cruttenden, *Intonation*, pp. 73-85.

manifestations of the link between focus and accent, and is most usually called *deaccenting*.[27]

Bolinger notes six principal sets of circumstances in which deaccenting is likely to occur. They are illustrated by the following sample utterances or pairs of sample utterances; in each case, the words in a reduced font size are deaccented:

(1) (a) What's your policy toward Israel? – I've already told you about that
(b) Did Ernest get away – No, they caught the nincompoop

(2) If heavy debt payments are weighing you down...

(3) (a) How far is it? - About a mile from here
(b) What's the matter? - My head aches

(4) We're lost - It's not my fault. I'm not responsible

(5) I have to hurry along. My cousin's having breakfast with us

(6) It's awful the way they manipulate the people of this country[28]

The examples cited in (1) represent the most widely recognised motivation for deaccenting, called by Bolinger *coreferentiality* or simply *old stuff*: in such utterances, the deaccented portion refers to something already mentioned. Some analyses of deaccenting limit themselves to such cases, which can be described in terms of a contrast between *given and new information*. However, this is often a problematic distinction, and it is preferable to follow Bolinger in generalising to the speaker's *relative interest* in the parts of his or her utterance.[29]

Utterances (2) to (6) represent further accentual consequences of relative interest. In (2), the meaning of the deaccented portion can be taken

---

[27]The first full discussion of deaccenting is that in D. Robert Ladd, Jr, *The Structure of Intonational Meaning: Evidence from English* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), Ch. 4.

[28]Adapted from Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, pp. 112-114.

[29]Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, pp. 89-90, and *Intonation and its Uses*, pp. 236-40, present examples of how, when interest and informativeness diverge, the former is more likely to be reflected accentually.

to be *already implied in the context*: heaviness weighs one down. In (3), the deaccented portions represent *ubiquitous meanings that can be taken for granted.* The starting-point for the distance measurement given by the speaker in (3a) can be assumed to be the point at which he is speaking: 'here' therefore needs no accent. Similarly, (3b)'s statement that the head 'aches' is superfluous, since the verb 'ache' normally means no more than 'what is wrong when a head is wrong'. In (4), the deaccented portion represents a *meaning intimately shared by speaker and listener*: between these two people, the idea of fault springs to mind as soon as it is realised that they are lost, and the second speaker desires simply to be absolved of it. In (5), the meaning of the deaccented portion is *sacrificed to a nearby focal meaning*: though the mention of the speaker's cousin does not, of course, have to imply any breakfast appointment, he or she expects that mention to suffice as an explanation of his or her haste. Finally, (6) illustrates that there may be cases where nothing is immediately apparent in either text or context to explain why a speaker has chosen to deaccent; there is a *meaning the speaker simply chooses to play down*, in this case perhaps feeling that the accented adjective *awful* carries sufficient emotional weight for the whole utterance.

The precise phonetic consequences of deaccenting remain unclear. Janet Bing has argued that no pitch accents at all will be heard in deaccented items such as those quoted above.[30] Bolinger suggests this may be an overstatement, with deaccented speech better defined in terms of the relative height of any pitch accents which such speech includes: they will be lower, or, in Bolinger's terms, 'slight bumps on the landscape'.[31] Given this disagreement, decision as to the best notation of a perceived prominence in deaccented speech is best resolved case by case.

---

[30]Janet Bing, *Aspects of English Prosody* (New York: Garland, 1985), p. 31.
[31]Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p. 127.

The significance of deaccenting for poetry lies in its capacity to provide an intimate link between interpretation and performance. To predict that a given line of poetry may, in performance, lose certain of its possible accents almost certainly requires a clear sense of the speaker's feelings towards its meaning, and that the critic make a commitment as to what these meanings may be. This need not imply a definitional or prescriptive approach, whereby criticism fixes a single meaning to a line of poetry; rather, it is one way of allowing the performative consequences of different interpretations to be assessed.

Lines from D.H. Lawrence's 'Mountain Lion' provide an example of a deaccenting that may result from the reader's sense that information has been previously given. They describe an encounter with a man who, with a companion, is bearing a lion's corpse:

> He smiles, foolishly, as if he were caught doing wrong.
> And we smile, foolishly, as if we didn't know.[32]

It seems clear that the second occurrence of *smile* falls into the category of 'old stuff'; the burden of the line is not in the verb, but in the pronoun, and in the awkwardness of the poet's repeating an already awkward sign of greeting: *He smiles – We smile.* The verb should, on this understanding, be deaccented, as the major accent shifts to *we*:

> He smiles, foolishly, as if he were caught doing wrong.
> And we smile, foolishly, as if we didn't know.

We smile has the further advantage of looking back to the rising pattern of *He smiles*, with which it forms a kind of intonational chiasmus (x / : / x), and forward to the falling pattern of *foolishly*. Other items in the second line may also be considered 'old stuff'; both *foolishly* and *as if* have

---

[32]*The Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. by Vivian de Sola Pinto and F. Warren Roberts, rev. edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), pp. 401-402 (p. 401).

already occurred. Yet it is physically very difficult to deaccent all of this portion:

?And we smile, foolishly, as if we didn't know

and moreover the feeling persists that the foolishness of the two sides is slightly different, as is the nature of the comparison introduced by *as if*.[33] In one possible performance, these words will keep their accents, but will be given a slightly different intonational realisation to that used in the preceding line - perhaps a lower pitch 'baseline', and smaller steps on accented syllables.

b) Reaccenting

In many instances, an accent will be placed on an item which might not be expected to receive one. The simplest examples of this are cases of *contrast*, as in the following example:

They don't care about my feelings

with the clear implication that other people's feelings *are* taken into account. This phenomenon - which is here called *reaccenting* - is closely allied with deaccenting; the reading of Lawrence's 'Mountain Lion' could be described in terms of the unexpected accent on *We* as much as the lack of one on *smile*.

However, there are cases where more is at stake than simple contrast; reaccenting may be the principal manifestation of the reader's ability to diverge from everyday usage in the interests of the poem. In Pound's Canto CXV, for example, the difference between:

---

[33]The question mark signals an utterance felt to be unlikely to occur in normal conditions.

A blown husk that is finished
but the light sings eternal

and:

A blown husk that is finished
but the light sings eternal

lies in the accent on *sings*, an accent which the speech-synthesis model would tend to suppress; yet that accent may mean the difference between a performance that allows a metaphor to resemble a cliché (*the light sings eternal*; as *hope springs eternal*) and one that does not.[34] To accent *sings* focuses attention on what is a key verb in the *Cantos*, and the resulting breaking of a stereotyped accentual pattern can refresh the adjoining, and equally significant *light* and *eternal* - words which may otherwise also seem stale.

iii) The role of rhythm

There are some rhythmic aspects of English speech that have been so widely observed and noted as to be suggested by some commentators to be part of all speakers' preferences, and thus very likely to influence speech behaviour. These have in common a derivation from a general preference among speakers of English which, according to Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen, was first noted by Henry Sweet: that towards *rhythmic alternation*, whereby prominent and unprominent syllables are combined in generally alternating sequence.[35]

---

[34]*The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, 4th edn (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 808.
[35]Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen, *English Speech Rhythm: Form and Function in Everyday Verbal Interaction* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1993), p. 82.

a) Avoiding accentual clash

The most simple consequence of the tendency to rhythmic alternation can be seen in speakers' efforts to avoid placing accents on adjacent syllables. A well-known manifestation of this is the existence in English of words which display more than one stress pattern, allowing speakers to choose that which avoids an immediate juxtaposing of accents: *thirteen*, but *thirteen men.* In the same way, speakers may choose an appropriate synonym to avoid 'accentual clash' - Bolinger cites *I had to do the luncheon dishes*, uttered by a speaker who would normally use the word *lunch* - or add a semantically relatively empty word as ballast.[36]

A manifestation of the tendency to alternating rhythm can be found in another poem by Lawrence, 'Bibbles', on a puppy. Here, the speaker has chosen to use the word *old* to separate an adjective and noun that would otherwise carry adjacent accents:

> Plenty of game old spirit in you, Bibbles.
> Plenty of game old spunk, little bitch.[37]

Given *old*'s largely conventional function as rhythmic buffer, the reader is most likely to leave the word unaccented. If an accent *is* used, perhaps in the second line, the lines will seem to display an extra involvement on the part of the speaker; whether this is desirable, or even bearable, is another matter.

b) Spacing accents for rhythm

The above examples are restricted to fairly short sequences of syllables. In considering a possible rhythmic influence on whole phrases or utterances, a more complex series of considerations come into play,

---

[36]Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p. 54.
[37]Lawrence, *Complete Poems*, pp. 394-400 (p. 397).

notably those of focus and context. Even at this level, however, certain preferences are regularly visible in spoken English. Bolinger suggests that trochaic rhythms, in which prominences occur every other syllable, are typically disliked by speakers in most contexts; dactylic rhythms, where two syllables intervene between prominences, are much more acceptable.[38] Bruce Hayes, working within a different tradition, has proposed *principles of eurhythmy*, language-specific preferences which affect prominence assignment at the level of the phrase. He has suggested that speakers may aim at an interval of four syllables between prominences, with a further subdivision after two.[39] Both claims are evidentially problematic.[40] However, their simplest contention - that speakers avoid 'jingly' alternations of stressed and unstressed syllables, preferring to alter the accentual pattern of their utterance accordingly - is a useful tool in the discussion of nonmetrical poetry.

B) NUCLEUS ASSIGNMENT

Nucleus was defined earlier in this chapter as the most prominent pitch accent in a tone group. Its location has most usually been described as falling on the last lexical item of the group, with exceptions made for certain kinds of sentence, and for the unpredictable effects of focus assignment.[41] However, these unpredictabilities, coupled with the problematic nature of the lexical / grammatical distinction, make such a

---

[38]Bolinger, *Intonation and its Parts*, p. 66.
[39]Hayes, p. 372.
[40]William E. Cooper, 'A Psychological Perspective on Intonational Grouping', *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 18 (1989), 549-52. See also the comments in Cureton, *Rhythmic Phrasing*, pp. 104-6.
[41]E.g. Crystal, *Prosodic Systems*, p. 263; Cruttenden, *Intonation*, pp. 73-86.

formula hazardous, and attempts have more than once been made to revise it.[42]

The method adopted in previous sections should make nucleus prediction relatively unproblematic. The link between focus and accent, where easily determined, makes assignment very simple: the point of greatest prominence will be where the speaker has assigned focus. Such, for example, is the case in the first line of Lawrence's 'Bavarian Gentians', which I read with pitch accents and intonation groups marked as follows:

> / Not **e**very man / has **gen**tians in his h**ou**se /
> in **soft** Sept**em**ber, / at sl**ow**, **sad** M**i**chaelmas / [43]

Given the title of the poem, and the first line's assertion of the flower's rarity, it seems likely that the speaker will place focus on *gentians*, with its accent acquiring a particular prominence as a result; in such a performance, that accent may be marked as the nucleus without difficulty:[44]

> .../ has g**E**ntians in his h**ou**se /

A similarly unproblematic process of assignment can occur in groups containing only one pitch accent, as in this poem's opening words - the nucleus has nowhere to fall but on that accent.

In cases where a group contains multiple accents, but where no link to focus can be pointed to with confidence - as may be the case in l. 2 of this extract - nucleus assignment is less straightforward. Is *soft* or *September* more prominent? One assumption about nucleus placement is so widespread as to be a necessary tool in such cases. This is the belief that the most prominent accent of any intonation group is typically its last.

---

[42]E.g. Altenberg, Ch. 7.
[43]Lawrence, *Complete Poems*, p. 697.
[44]An alternative performance, which is not considered here, would accent *Gentians* only in the poem's title, and deaccent it in l. 1 of the text proper.

The nature of this phenomenon is unclear, and, as stated earlier, the confusion has caused the whole notion of nucleus to be doubted by some theorists. Most notably, it is unclear whether the greater prominence of final accents is acoustic or auditory: whether speakers produce such accents with measurably greater pitch change or other phonetic signal, or listeners merely ascribe a particular importance to them on the grounds of their position.[45] Whatever its explanation, there is a broad agreement on the existence of the phenomenon, one shared by theorists as different as Bolinger on the one hand, and Chomsky and Halle on the other - the Nuclear Stress Rule is, in essence, its codification.[46] Indeed, the assumption that the nucleus will fall on the last lexical item in an intonation group, alluded to above, restates this.

In the light of this consensus, a reasonable working assumption is that where uncertainty as to nucleus placement exists, the rightmost accent will be the most prominent. In the Lawrence example quoted earlier, this gives the following pattern:

/not **E**very man / has g**E**ntians in his h**ou**se /
in soft sept**E**mber, / at slow, s**a**d m**I**chaelmas /.

C) NON-PITCH PROMINENCE ASSIGNMENT

In section 1c, some of the factors that may cause a syllable lacking a pitch movement to be perceived as prominent were described. The plurality of these factors means that no straightforward predictive mechanisms are available; furthermore, listeners may vary considerably in their perception

---

[45]Bolinger posits a 'psychological principle of last-heard-best-noted' in this connection (*Intonation and its Parts*, p. 49).
[46]See also Knowles, 'From Text Structure', p. 164.

of non-pitch prominences.[47] Intuition is therefore the necessary arbiter, but can be assisted by exploration of the different cues available.

Three cues were alluded to in 1c: two that are phonetic, and one that is based in listeners' rhythmic preferences. Of the phonetic cues, the more important is variation in duration and intensity. Speakers who do not assign a pitch movement to a stressable syllable may nonetheless lengthen it, or make it louder, with the result that a prominence is perceived. Alan Cruttenden gives as an example the sentence

I ran all the way to the station

in which *ran* and *sta-* are made prominent by pitch change, while *way* receives increased loudness or duration.[48] The word types to which the Lancaster mode assigns class S, and that are therefore particularly likely to be assigned this kind of prominence, include verbs and some 'grammatical' items; as this example illustrates, syllables which have been subject to intermediate accent suppression may also be made prominent in this way.

A second phonetic distinction is between full and reduced vowels. In a sequence such as

He saw us there

the vowel of *us* is likely to be reduced: that is, pronounced with reduced resonance, and closer to schwa than to the full vowel which would be heard were it to be accented - as in the reply *Us?*, for example. Reduced vowels, which in connected speech occur in many auxiliary and modal verbs, in the

---

[47]Brian Pickering, Briony Williams and Gerry Knowles, 'Analysis of Transcriber Differences in the SEC', in Knowles, Wichmann and Alderson, pp. 61-86, notes (p. 68) that non-pitch prominences accounted for the highest proportion of disagreements between transcribers.

[48]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 18.

definite and indefinite articles, the infinitive marker *to*, and other grammatical items, are extremely unlikely to be heard as prominent.[49] In contrast, syllables adjacent to them, such as *there* in the above example, may be heard as prominent even in the absence of other phonetic cues. In l. 2 of Williams's 'Tract', for example, the second syllable of *perform* may, or may not, be pronounced with added length and duration; even if it is not, the fact that the vowel of *per-* is reduced will cause the listener to hear *-form* as more prominent.[50]

A final cue to prominence is that of the rhythmic context in which a syllable falls. Experiments by Volker Huss have shown that the prominence assigned to words such as *import*, which as noun and verb has two lexical stress patterns, and which has no reduced vowel, depended in large measure on the prominence pattern of surrounding syllables.[51] For example, in the sentence *Now the Germans['] import sinks* , the word *import* might be interpreted as noun (***im**port*) or verb (*im**port***). However, Huss found that a majority of listeners heard it as a noun, and that this continued to be the case even when the recording was acoustically manipulated so that the cues associated with the verb could be heard. He therefore conjectured that listeners' projection forward of the alternating rhythmic pattern begun by ***Now the Germans*** was sufficiently strong to

---

[49]Ladefoged, p. 85, discusses and lists the full set of reduced vowels. It has been suggested by Bolinger, in *Two Kinds of Vowel, Two Kinds of Rhythm* (Bloomington: Indiana University Linguistics Club, 1981), and in *Intonation and its Parts*, Ch. 5, that the distinction between full and reduced vowels is central to speech rhythm in English, with particular relevance to timing.

[50]A different explanation of this phenomenon would relate it to the listener's familiarity with the lexical stress pattern of polysyllables, following the competence-based account of speech perception described, and rejected for the purposes of poetry, in Chapter 2. In cases of vowel reduction, such an explanation is superfluous; in other cases, its validity is uncertain. For an experimental study, see Beverley D. Fear, Anne Cutler and Sally Butterfield, 'The Strong / Weak Syllable Distinction in English', *JASA*, 97 (1995), 1893-1904.

[51]Volker Huss, 'English Word Stress in the Post-Nuclear Position', *Phonetica*, 35 (1978), 86-105. The use of words uttered shortly after the nucleus was intended to exclude pitch accents.

overcome contrary acoustic cues, and confirmed this by constructing a sentence whose rhythm was rising, rather than falling; this time, most listeners perceived the prominence pattern associated with the verb. These findings suggest that, where a stressable syllable will permit the continuance of a rhythmic pattern if it is perceived as prominent, it is very likely to be so perceived.

D) BEAT ASSIGNMENT

A very similar interaction between phonetics and psychology explains the importance of the beat to poetic metre. As noted in section 1d, a beat is not a kind of prominence; it is a status assigned to a prominence by the listener who infers a metrical pattern from the series of prominences heard. In discussions of nonmetrical verse, beat assignment is by definition likely to play a relatively minor role. Nonetheless, it is an important component of performance prediction, with particular significance to works whose relationship to metre is unclear.

Whether the medium be poetry, speech or music, the perception of rhythmic beats requires that two conditions be met. The first is that the listener be able to identify, among the mass of perceived phenomena, those from which a metre may be inferred. In music, beats are often expected to fall on longer notes; in language, they are associated with syllabic prominences. The second is that these phenomena must be distributed in a way that the listener may interpret as reflecting a formal ordering principle. In music, metrically significant notes occur at similar intervals of time. According to one psychological model, the listener hypothesises metrical structure on the basis of the interval separating the first two notes, and revises this hypothesis, on the basis of subsequent note values, until a

regularly repeating cycle is confirmed.[52] In language, time also plays a part, but theories of linguistic and poetic rhythm that rely entirely on a supposed equality of intervals between prominences are almost certainly inadequate.[53] Many other factors, including phonological and intonational grouping, intervene, while in a poetic context, listeners may recognise familiar metrical patterns on the basis of relatively weak cues.

In its approach to beat assignment, *REP* profits from this convergence of influences, and provides an extremely successful predictive model of rhythm for poetry within the main accentual and accentual-syllabic traditions of English verse. Beats are not assigned on the basis of an independently postulated perceptual isochrony, but on that of prominence and syllable distribution. This is possible because of the rhythmic characteristics of English, in which a tendency to 'stress-timing' - that is, isochrony between prominences - is mitigated by a tendency to 'syllable-timing'. Nonprominent syllables cannot be infinitely compressed in the attempt to achieve isochrony, since a certain amount of time is necessary for their clear articulation; isochrony is normally achievable, according to a study cited by Attridge, only where the number of nonprominences between prominences is kept at one or two.[54] In such circumstances, the tendency to 'stress-timing' will cause prominences to be spaced at intervals that, while not identical, are close enough for a listener to perceive them as isochronous. Perceptual isochrony is further reinforced where the

---

[52]H.C. Longuet-Higgins and C.S. Lee, 'The Perception of Musical Rhythm', *Perception*, 11 (1982), 115-28. A summary of recent work is Eric F. Clarke, 'Rhythm and Timing in Music', in *The Psychology of Music*, ed. by Diana Deutsch, 2nd edn (San Diego: Academic Press, 1999), pp. 473-500.

[53]The text most associated with claims for isochrony is Patmore's 'Essay on English Metrical Law'. Couper-Kuhlen, *English Speech Rhythm*, draws on recent work in phonetics. Against isochrony, see D.W. Harding, *Words into Rhythm: English Speech Rhythm in Verse and Prose* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Reuven Tsur, *Poetic Rhythm: Structure and Performance* (Berne: Peter Lang, 1998), pp. 295-318.

[54]*REP*, p. 73.

emergent pattern of prominences resembles that associated with a familiar metre.

The assignment of beats within *REP* includes two stages. The first is the establishment of a poem's *stress pattern.* This is not a phonetic account of prominence distribution, such as is suggested in previous sections of this chapter, but a simplified model which has two main categories - stressed and unstressed - into which items are assigned on the basis of class membership. Other categories include *stressable*, comprising syllables which can function as either stressed or unstressed, and *metrically subordinate*. Metrical subordination is a feature attributed by Attridge to syntactic structure, occurring when a single syntactic unit contains adjacent stresses. The first of these - say, a stress falling on an adjective - may be subordinate to the second: that on the noun qualified by the adjective. In Pope's line 'Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer', for example, the stress on *faint* is said to be subordinate to that on *praise*, and thus for metrical purposes to function as an unstressed syllable.[55]

Once the stress pattern is determined, *REP* assigns beats through the application of a set of *realisation rules.* These rules describe the relationships between language and metre that are permitted in the familiar forms of English poetry: the ways in which stresses and nonstresses may be correlated, in performance and perception, with a pattern of alternating beats and offbeats. Attridge states that such rules are not 'instruction[s] which poet and reader are obliged to follow', but:

> statements of consistencies in the behaviour of poets and readers, those habits of mind and speech-apparatus which make the creation and appreciation of metrical form possible.[56]

---

[55]*REP*, p. 231.
[56]*REP*, p. 152.

The simplest such consistencies are described by *base rules*. Those for duple metre - that is, metre in which there is most frequently only one nonprominent syllable between prominences - as follows:

Beat rule
A stressed syllable may realise a beat.

Offbeat rule
One (or two) unstressed syllables may realise an offbeat.

The parenthesis in the offbeat rule conveys the fact that, while double offbeats are possible in duple verse, the preference of poetry in that form is for single offbeats. Promotion and demotion, and implied offbeats, are described through a set of *deviation rules*, which state the circumstances in which they may occur. Again, those for duple metre are given here:

Promotion rule
An unstressed syllable may realise a beat when it occurs between two unstressed syllables, or with a line boundary on one side and an unstressed syllable on the other.

Demotion rule
A stressed syllable may realise an offbeat when it occurs between two stressed syllables, or after a line-boundary and before a stressed syllable.

Implied offbeat rule
An offbeat may be implied between two stressed syllables.

The demotion rule, for example, explains why (1) is a metrical four-beat line, but (1a) is not:

(1) Full fathom five thy father lies

(1a) Fathoms five thy father lies drowned

In (1), the stress to be demoted - on *full* - falls after a line-boundary and before a further stress; in (1a), *drowned* falls before a line-boundary - a circumstance in which demotion fails to function.

In discussions of nonmetrical poetry, the realisation rules can be helpful in corroborating the scansion of passages strongly felt to be

metrical, and in explaining how and why they work. Their more challenging role is in assessing the metricality of lines to which a metrical performance may be given, but where uncertainty prevails as to the strength of the link between text and performance. Between metre and nonmetre lies an ambiguous terrain, described by Attridge as a 'no man's land'; he admits in *REP* that the freer metrical styles may not be suited to a rule-based approach, and these styles are largely absent from his work.[57] *REP*'s discussion of nonmetrical poetry similarly states, as noted in Chapter 2, that aspects of it are 'highly subjective'.[58] These considerations are awkward for any study that seeks to apply *REP* to nonmetrical poetry, since they suggest that the realisation rules may cease to be reliable precisely at the point where a means of assessing metrical intuitions is most to be desired.

The proposal of this thesis is that, in such circumstances, the realisation rules be used less as predictive tools than as a way of determining the likely difficulty of different performances. If the metricality of an ambiguous line is to be established, a significant departure from the *REP* approach may be necessary, with attention paid to the phonetic detail of prominences, and even intonation-group boundaries, and to the pragmatic influences on performers' choices in the distribution of these. Consideration of such factors implies a divergence from Attridge's approach, which draws a clear distinction between structure and performance, yet seems both necessary and worthwhile.[59]

---

[57]*REP*, p. 204.
[58]*REP*, p. 322.
[59]See, for example, the discussion of strong-stress metre in *Poetic Rhythm*, pp. 88-89.

The following lines are from Robert Lowell's *Notebook*, a volume of blank-verse sonnets; the first of them would be considered unmetrical by the application of the *REP* rules:

> the two armed guards petrified beside us, while we had champagne,
> and someone bugging the President: 'Where are the girls?'[60]

Probably the only way to read it as a pentameter is with beats distributed as follows:

> the two armed guards petrified beside us, while we had champagne
> B B B B B

This is a performance which, for reasons set out below, seems to me both plausible and justified. However, it cannot be generated by the *REP* rules. It contains several double offbeats, a state of affairs which, if not impossible within a pentameter, is considered by Attridge to be unusual; it contains two triple offbeats, which are exceptional even in the stronger four-beat metres, and which are described by no rule.[61] These are not final difficulties, since they are of a kind which an adaptation of the rules to account for this freer style could describe. The more serious problem is posed by the relationship between language and rhythm in the first three words. Both *two* and *armed* are stressed, within *REP*'s conception of the stress pattern, and indeed, most readers will make both prominent. One of them may be considered an example of metrical subordination. One of them - probably *two* - may not, however, which means that if the triple offbeat is to function correctly, it must be demoted. A triple offbeat that includes a demotion is impossible to reconcile, not only with the *REP* realisation rules as they stand, but with any workable reformulation of

---

[60]Robert Lowell, 'Caracas I', *Notebook*, 3rd edn (New York: The Noonday Press, 1971), pp. 53-54 (p. 53).
[61]*Poetic Rhythm*, pp. 159-60; *REP*, p. 163.

them. A realisation rule that was altered to accommodate it might need to state that any three syllables may realise an offbeat if they fall between a line-boundary and a stress; such a generously formulated rule would fail to exclude many impossible lines.

A more immediate way to consider the metricality of this line - and of the many other lines within twentieth-century poetry whose status is unclear - is through attention to phonetics and performance decisions. This is, of course, the approach to prosody proposed throughout this thesis, but its use here is not suggested on the grounds of dogmatism; it seems genuinely to help account for such difficult styles.

The most important decision facing the performer is that to attempt metricality. Why should s/he attempt to mould such an awkward line into a pentameter? In the case of *Notebook*, the answer is relatively straightforward. The poem, like all those in the volume, is in blank verse, and although Lowell states in an endnote to the collection that his metre 'is fairly strict at first and elsewhere, but often corrupts in single lines to the freedom of prose', some of *Notebook*'s principal pleasures are the ways in which this 'corruption' may be warded off.[62] Some lines cannot be made metrical, but those that can offer the aesthetic satisfaction of a tense, complex structure, and the craft satisfaction of a difficult challenge met. These are strong inducements.

For the pentameter reading to succeed, the listener must identify its first beat with *guards*, and not with either of the adjectives which precede it. This means that *two armed guards* must be performed in such a way that the prominence on *guards* can be perceived as more important than those on *two* and *armed*. It also means that the rest of the line must be read in such a way that the listener who has interpreted the prominence on

---

[62] 'Afterthought', *Notebook*, pp. 263-64 (p. 263).

guards as the first beat of a pentameter has that hypothesis confirmed by the timing of subsequent prominences.

One way of achieving the first of these requirements would be to deaccent *two armed*. However, this would damage the clarity of the line, since both items are of sufficient interest to receive an accent. On the basis of the tendency to intermediate accent suppression, the accent on *armed* could be omitted, although this would run the risk of *two armed* being heard as *two-armed*. A compromise which retains clarity and which is close to everyday usage will give *two* a non-pitch prominence, and accent *armed* and *guards*:

the tw**o** **armed** g**ua**rds

If the listener is to interpret the prominence on *guards*, and not that on *two* or *armed*, as the line's first cue to a beat, it must suggest the most metrical potential among the three. This can be achieved by assigning a single intonation group to the words, with *guards* as nucleus:

/ the tw**o** **armed** g**UA**rds /

It will also help if the nucleus is given a more interesting realisation than the accents which proceed - probably a significantly greater pitch excursion:

the two armed g u a r d s

In such a performance, *guards* can displace *armed* from its likely provisional occupancy of the first beat position in the listener's attempt to interpret this line as a pentameter.[63] Furthermore, the intonation-group

[63]This is analogous to the 'UPDATE' routine proposed by Longuet-Higgins and Lee. This describes cases where a note is initially interpreted as a downbeat, then

boundary helps to fulfil the second suggested requirement for metre to be perceived in this line. It permits a brief pause between the accents on *guards* and *pet-*, which the listener can readily interpret as an implied offbeat:

/ the two armed gUArds / pEtrified
ŏ B ô B ŏ

The assignment of a beat to *guards* is thus quickly rewarded by its being shown to introduce the familiar pattern BôB. With the hypothesis confirmed, the pentameter status of the line is assured:

/ the two armed gUArds / pEtrified beside us, / while we had champAGne /
ŏ B ô B ŏ B ŏ B ŏ B

The realisation rules have been departed from, but continue to be relevant to analysis, for the point at which this performance is experienced as most hard-won - the opening - is precisely that which lies beyond them, and whose difficulty they therefore suggest.

This example suggests ways in which phonetic realisation, and performative choices, may be usefully considered within the prosodic response to ambiguously metrical poetry. Much twentieth-century poetry challenges the tolerances which the *REP* rules were designed to describe; in reading such poetry, the power of these tolerances to govern performance is reduced, and may cede before aesthetic or other considerations. This undoubtedly complicates the drawing of easy distinctions between the metrical and the nonmetrical. Lowell's line has been found here to be well served by a metrical performance, but a

---

reinterpreted as an upbeat when its successor turns out to be significantly longer. An example is the first note of 'Auld Lang Syne' (Longuet-Higgins and Lee, p. 121). Although the interchangeability of musical and linguistic cognition cannot be assumed, there is evidence that the two are neurologically similar; see, for example, A.D Patel and others, 'Processing Prosodic and Musical Patterns: A Neuropsychological Investigation', *Brain and Language*, 61 (1998), 123-44.

comparable line, less persuasive or in a less persuasive context, might be felt by the reader to be too far from metre to make such a reading possible. Such a line will be described as nonmetrical, in distinction to that by Lowell, but the distinction is one that cannot be predicted by phonological and metrical rule alone. The scansion of such lines therefore demands a combination of attentions: to the realisation rules as they express habitual tolerances, to the ways in which reader and listener can transcend those tolerances, and to those in which the poem may encourage such a transcending.

3 PRAGMATIC INFLUENCES

The tendencies of prominence assignment described so far are those associated with the most generally observed patterns of English-speaking usage, in a formal or semi-formal context. A subsidiary goal of some corpus linguistics is the description of some of the stylistic variations which they include. This area of research was pioneered by Crystal and Davy's *Investigating English Style*, published in 1969, where some of the intonational behaviour characteristic of - among other styles - conversation, liturgy and radio commentary was explored.[64] A study of the SEC made by Anne Wichmann continues this tradition, and makes more general observations.[65]

Wichmann suggests that four broad areas of context influence language use, including prosody. These are: the subject matter of the utterance or text; the discourse mode in which it is transmitted, namely as spontaneous speech, prepared speech, or as written language; the activity type involved,

---

[64]David Crystal and Derek Davy, *Investigating English Style* (London: Longman, 1969).

[65]Anne Wichmann, 'Prosodic Style: A Corpus-Based Approach', in Knowles, Wichmann and Alderson, pp. 168-88.

from writing a novel to conducting an interview; and the participants, including the individuals involved and the relations between them. Some of her own research involves consideration of poetry, and its conclusions are discussed below. However, it also provides more general guidance.

Of the four areas of context, it can probably be assumed that the *subject matter* of free verse is both too various and too elusive of definition to make any general investigation of its consequences for prosodic style worthwhile. Of more interest is the *discourse mode* implied by reading nonmetrical poetry aloud: it is speech, obviously, but is it prepared or spontaneous? Will the reader of a free-verse poem perform in such a way that it could be mistaken, if overheard, for unscripted talk, or will the performance be clearly identifiable as a reading? The relationship of poetry-reading to Wichmann's third criterion, *activity type*, may again appear elusive. Whatever aims and motivations underlie the reading of a poem, however, its performance remains a poetry reading; and this is an activity that is itself associated with a certain intonational stereotype. Finally, although the input of the *individual* into poetic performance is extremely complex, considerations of the influence of dialect, or of a familiarity with certain poetic conventions, may prove important to an understanding of how readers respond to poetic form. In each of these three areas, therefore, a general statement of the rhythmic and intonational consequences of the different choices available is a potentially useful tool.

A) 'CONVERSATIONAL' VS. 'READING' STYLES

Wichmann does not explore the intonational consequences of the distinction which she draws between 'spontaneous' and 'prepared' speech, perhaps because the SEC contains no instances of the former. However, the distinction can be seen in the light of previous linguists' observations in

this area. Writing in 1958, Roger Kingdon drew a distinction between 'conversational' and 'reading' styles. He summarises the two as follows:

> 1. The conversational style, which uses all the expressiveness that the situation warrants. In order to attain this end, frequent emphatic stresses, often accompanied by kinetic tones, are used on words that are felt to be important to the meaning, and further, in order to increase the stress contrast, stresses are suppressed... on words that otherwise would take sentence stress.
> 2. The reading style, used more especially in reading aloud passages of descriptive or narrative prose, in which the reader follows a norm designed to convey the meaning of the subject-matter in a rather more formal and less expressive manner.[66]

In the terms in which rhythm has so far can be discussed, Kingdon's point can be expressed simply: a text performed in the conversational style will display fewer prominences, and a greater contrast between prominent and unprominent syllables, than one performed in a reading style.

Kingdon's description of this style as a 'norm' implies for it the status of cultural artefact, and this is probably true; it must also be assumed to follow from the different grammatical and presentational strategies associated with written, as opposed to spoken language.[67] However, there are also specifically linguistic causes for the existence of this style. Readers of texts have, naturally, a different pragmatic relationship to their content than do spontaneous speakers. The text is likely to have been composed by a person other than the speaker; it will certainly have been composed in a different set of circumstances to those of its performance. Items within it have thus been chosen on the grounds of, and reflect, interests and preoccupations that are not those of the speaker at the time of speech, and which the speaker must attempt to determine as best s/he can. For Carlos Gussenhoven, the natural tendency when faced with this task is to 'give the producer of that sentence the benefit of the doubt' by assuming

---

[66]Roger Kingdon, *The Groundwork of English Intonation* (London: Longmans, Green, 1958), p. 169.

[67]Some of these are summarised in Douglas Biber, *Variation across Speech and Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 47.

that 'as much of it as is reasonable' should be considered as new and interesting.[68] In other words, the speaker is unlikely to perform the operations of deaccenting typical of spontaneous speech, and a higher proportion of accentable items will be accented.

The distinction between the two styles has been most thoroughly explored by David Brazil. For him, the choice which must be made by all readers is between a performance that will 'assume some particular context of interaction and make tone choices accordingly', and one which would 'interpret the request to read the item out simply as an invitation to say what was printed on the paper...[not reflecting] information about other aspects of the speaker / hearer worlds'.[69] Brazil sees the relationship between speaker and listener as central to the explanation of the difference:

> To deal with the phenomenon, we shall make a distinction between direct orientation and oblique orientation. By the former we shall mean the kind of set towards an identified hearer that results in choices meshing with some putative state of convergence. By the latter, we shall mean a set towards the language item which results in its being presented as a specimen of the language. In the latter case, the speaker does not presume that the linguistic sample he/she reads out has any kind of communicative significance in anyone's world, except as an uninterpreted entity.[70]

The choice presented is, then, that between entering into the world implied by the text, and remaining outside.[71]

The existence of these two basic performance styles has, I believe, significant implications for the analysis of free verse. An article was published in 1969 entitled 'The Poem as Summons to Performance'; this is

---

[68]Gussenhoven, *On the Grammar and Semantics of Sentence Accents*, p. 22.

[69]David Brazil, *The Communicative Value of Intonation in English*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 132-33. An earlier version of this argument is presented in David Brazil, Malcolm Coulthard, and Catherine Johns, *Discourse Intonation and Language Teaching* (London: Longman, 1980), Ch. 7.

[70]Brazil *The Communicative Value of Intonation*, p. 133.

[71]Brazil returned to this question in 'Listening to People Reading', in *Advances in Spoken Discourse Analysis*, ed. by Malcolm Coulthard (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 209-41. In place of the earlier formulation, this study proposes a continuum of five 'degrees of engagement'.

an attractive image, yet the power of a printed poem to *oblige* its readers to give voice to the text - to 'summons' them - is limited.[72] A more accurate metaphor might therefore be that a poem constitutes an *invitation* to performance; if the argument sketched so far is accepted, one aspect of this invitation is that the performer is invited to enter fully into the pragmatics implied within the poem, and to reflect these pragmatics intonationally. This may be extremely difficult, and may also be deemed undesirable on stylistic or other grounds. However, the acceptance or refusal of this aspect of poetry, particularly twentieth-century poetry, will have considerable prosodic consequences. At its most extreme, a refusal will negate all of the interpretative and formal possibilities which can flow from the sensitive assignment of focus, and thus of accent.

The choices involved may best be seen in the light of the potential for performative informality present in the strand of Modernist free verse associated with William Carlos Williams. In Williams's work, colloquial diction and informal grammatical structures - the 'American speech' famously described by the poet as being that of Polish mothers - are employed in the absence of any pressing metrical template; this lack of metre allows readers to produce the intonational patterns appropriate to the poems' diction and syntax, without feeling that a vital facet of the poem is being ignored. Such a liberty is denied the readers of poetry which is both colloquial *and* metrical, such as the blank verse dialogues of Robert Frost, since these readers are likely to feel that the iambic pentameter which lies behind each line must be allowed to make its presence felt. The choice is therefore that between a reading which gives itself entirely to these patterns, as might an actor in the realist theatre, and one which retains some of the detachment associated with the 'reading style'.

---

[72]William Craig Forrest, 'The Poem as a Summons to Performance', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 9 (1969), 298-305.

The prosodic consequences of the performer's decision in this regard may be illustrated with readings of many of Williams's poems. 'No Good Too' (1948) provides a particularly clear demonstration:

> She's the girl
> had her picture
> in the papers: just
> 14 years old and
>
> ran off with
> the guy her mother
> brought home
> from a gin mill.[73]

The speaking persona of this poem is making certain assumptions, one of which is that the assumptions in question are shared by his listener or listeners. These may include: that both speaker and listener(s) can see, or have just heard a reference to, the girl mentioned; that both read, or are aware of how newspapers use human-interest stories and photographs; that if a girl *runs off with*, or a woman *brings home* another person, that person will be a man, and the relationship will be sexual; that it is more surprising that a girl leave home with her mother's partner than that her mother should have taken a partner in the first place; that a cotton mill may, nonetheless, be considered an unusual place to find such a partner; that the relationships described here are a fully acceptable topic of conversation. These patterns of assumption and relative interest are reflected both lexically (*run off with*, which assumes that the listener can infer the sexual nature of the relationship) and syntactically. For example, the speaker chooses *She's the girl* rather than *I know a girl*, which would be appropriate only if the listener had no prior knowledge of the girl in question, and *the guy her mother brought home*, which focuses attention away from the man and onto the mother, rather than *a guy her mother brought home*, where the

---

[73]Williams, *Collected Poems*, II, 119.

indefinite article would have given the man the status of a newly-introduced and interesting element within the narrative, rather than that of a player whose role in the triangle can be taken for granted.

The reader may well decide that the assumptions which these lexical and syntactic devices express should be reflected prosodically. This will in part be achieved on the principles of focus assignment discussed above, and their consequences for accent placement. Such a decision would lead to a performance sounding something like the following:

/ shE's the girl /
had her pIcture
in the papers:/ just
fOUrteen years old / and

ran Off with
the guy / her mother
brought home
from a gIn mill.[74]

This performance accords with the speaker assumptions just outlined. The deaccenting of *girl* follows from her status as 'old stuff' within the conversation; *papers* can be deaccented since that is where pictures of people about whom stories are told are likely to appear; *the guy* is deaccented, as is *brought home*, because these items refer to the conventional aspects of the sexual relationships described. Accents are accorded only to what is of prime narrative interest: the new couple's rupture of the home unit (*ran off*), and its explanation in the fact that the man was already claimed within it (*her mother*). The accent on *gin mill* helps it to function as a flourish of detail.[75]

This reading is offered as that resulting from one interpretation of the pragmatics implicit within 'No Good Too'. A different interpretation

---

[74]Such a performance does not see Williams's use of linebreak as a cue to pause or tone-group boundary. See Chapter 4, below.
[75]These explanations may be more explicit than anything of which the speaker is aware.

would choose different patterns of accent; within this interpretation, different dialects might choose to place accents differently.[76] However, all such interpretative performances will be different from that which will result from a decision to read 'No Good Too' in the 'reading style'. If the reader chooses to resist the poem's invitation to enter its world of evidence and implicature, no use will be made of accenting and deaccenting as a means to signal the relationships of focus between the text's different elements. The performance will resemble the following:

/ she's the girl
had her picture
in the pÁpers:/ just
fourteen years Old / and

ran off with
the guy her mother
brought home
from a gIn mill /

There are many more accents here, and the nuclei are more sparsely distributed; the contrasts between more and less interesting elements, and the assumptions on which these judgements rest, are not reflected. Such a performance represents a difference in nature, and not simply of degree, from those which attempt to mimic via rhythm and intonation the full pragmatic burden of conversation.

An awareness of the typical areas of difference between reading and conversational styles can make a significant contribution to analysis of those poems - from 'No Good Too' to the Appalachian work of Jonathan Williams - which invite the reader to give his or her voice to a performance which diverges significantly from the patterns which might traditionally be associated with the act of reading aloud. Whether this invitation is accepted - *ShEs the girl...* - or refused - *She's the girl...* - will depend on many

---

[76]Dialects can, for example, differ in the accenting of phrasal verbs: *ran off* versus *ran off*.

factors, from the dialect and class affiliations of the performer, to prevailing fashions in public reading.

B) POETRY-READING AS ACTIVITY

Returning to Wichmann's categories, the difference between 'prepared' and 'spontaneous' speech is one of *discourse*, the second of the four influences on performance that must be taken into consideration. The third potential influence is that of *activity type*. Poetry, as Joshua Steele observed, 'is often read in a certain formal manner', and, although this manner may in many respects be defined in terms of tone choice - as Chapter 4 notes, it often includes a high proportion of level tones - it also has consequences for rhythm.[77]

Some of these result from the fact that poetry is often read at a slower pace than is prose. Prudence Byers suggests that this may be explained with reference both to generic associations of formality and seriousness, and to readers' desire to allow rhythmic and intonational patterning to be clearly heard.[78] A slow pace may work against the adoption of a 'conversational' style, in poems where that style is a possibility. In other cases, it is likely to mean that a higher proportion of accentable syllables will receive accents, including secondary stresses which might in any other context go unmarked. In Chapter 7, for example, a recording of a reading by Allen Ginsberg is cited in which *Buddhahood* is pronounced *Buddhahood.* Such a care for rhythmic contrast at every level may be unique to poetry-reading.

Poetry's traditional association with metre constitutes another potential influence on performance, as both prominence distribution and timing may

---

[77]Steele, pp. 76-77.
[78]Byers, 'A Formula, pp. 369-70, p. 377.

be pushed in the direction of a rhythmically regular performance. In the case of Robert Lowell's 'Caracas I', cited above, this process is motivated by lines' resemblance to a recognisable metrical template, that of iambic pentameter, and by contextual influences pointing to the same template. In other cases, the influence of metre may be more diffuse, yet have equally powerful consequences.

A poem like Ezra Pound's 'Dance Figure' (1913) does not seem to conform to any metrical scheme, yet the reader is encouraged towards the kind of reading which the poet himself seems to suggest in his description of the work as 'vers libre with accent heavily marked as a drum-beat'.[79]

> Dark eyed
> O woman of my dreams,
> Ivory sandaled,
> There is none like thee among the dancers,
> None with swift feet.[80]

The reader may alter his or her prominence placement - / *dArk* / ***EYEed*** instead of / *dark* ***EYEd*** / - and will almost certainly time prominences in such a way as to suggest perceptual isochrony within each line, with each prominence therefore functioning as a beat, and each line as a minimal embodiment of metre. S/he is encouraged in such a performance by several factors. Some are unique to the poem - its formal diction and ritualistic syntax, its omission of the hyphen from *dark eyed* - but generic cues are also important. The association of poetry - even in 1913 - with metre based on rhythmic alternation is one such. Another is the traditional role of linebreak as a marker of rhythmically equivalent units. In poetry that does not employ frequent run-on lines, linebreak's associations with this role may encourage line-end pauses to be timed in such a way as to

---

[79]Ezra Pound, 'A Retrospect', in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. by T.S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), pp. 3-14 (p. 12).
[80]Ezra Pound, 'Dance Figure', *Personae: Collected Shorter Poems of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), pp. 99-100 (p. 99).

permit, where possible, the perception of unrealised beats. Indeed, in some performances of Pound's lines, the combination of these influences may be so strong that the lines may come to seem fully metrical - as two eight-beat sequences, say, with two unrealised beats after l. 3, and one after each of l. 4 and l. 5.

This example is not intended to suggest a recuperation as metrical of all nonmetrical poetry. It does, however, illustrate the extent to which generic and conventional associations may influence performance. Where these associations lead the reader of a nonmetrical poem to adopt the articulatory habits associated with metre, and where there is an appropriate distribution of prominences within and between lines, the reading that results can be surprisingly regular.

C) HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although a performance is in part defined by very changeable pragmatic circumstances, some of these circumstances, including dialectal differences and changes in performance style, are sufficiently stable to be incorporated into prosody. The principles underlying such an incorporation were described in Chapter 2, but their application is complicated by a severe lack of data. The intonational differences between Great Britain and the United States, to take one obvious example, have never been the object of a proper study.[81] Nonetheless, some comments are possible.

The influence of dialect on prominence assignment appears to be relatively small. Differences in lexical stress pattern - such as that between *inquiry* and *inquiry*, the latter possible in General American but not in British dialects - will certainly be reflected in accent assignment, but in the

---

[81] 'A task for the future' - Bolinger, *Intonation and its Uses*, p. 28.

post-lexical processes with which this chapter has been concerned, no study suggests that dialect has a significant role to play.[82] This does not, of course, mean that no such influence exists. It has long been observed, for example, that the rhythms of English as spoken in India are proportionately less accent-based, and more syllabic, than the dialects spoken in Britain and the United States.[83] A recent article by David Crystal raises the possibility that, as English becomes increasingly international, its characteristic accent-based rhythm may increasingly be subsumed within just such an isosyllabism.[84]

A more substantial generator of rhythmic change is likely to be that brought by developments in performance style. Reading styles have changed dramatically in the later twentieth century, with an informal intonation much more favoured than a 'reading' style. Such a change is likely to have an impact on accenting that is both direct, via a greater willingness to deaccent, for example, and indirect, since a style that is more conversational may be thought less likely to attend to a metrical possibility. Ezra Pound's recorded readings employ a dramatic, incantatory style that is now out of favour; in consequence, the metrical potential of poems such as 'Dance Figure' and 'The Seafarer' may be less likely to be noticed. However, such a statement is speculative, since, although studies in performance history do exist, they are relatively silent on the prosodic detail, tending to consider the phenomenon exclusively from the standpoint

---

[82]J.C. Wells, *Accents of English*, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), I, p. 88; Daniel Hirst and Albert Di Cristo, 'A Survey of Intonation Systems', in *Intonation Systems: A Survey of Twenty Languages*, ed. by Daniel Hirst and Albert Di Cristo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1-44 (p. 38).

[83]See Wells, III, 631.

[84]David Crystal, 'Documenting Rhythmical Change', in *Studies in English and General Phonetics: Essays in Honour of Professor J.D. O'Connor*, ed. by Jack Windsor Lewis (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 174-79. Windsor Lewis suggests (p. xvii) that Crystal's intention may not be entirely serious.

of cultural history.[85] A prosodically-oriented history of performance would be an extremely useful addition to the tools and mechanisms described in this chapter. Indeed, there is much future research to be carried out in this area; at present, the ad-hoc recourse to literary-historical inquiry described in Chapter 2 constitutes one of the few tools available.

---

[85]E.g. Josephine A. Johnson, 'Return of the Scops: English Poetry Performance since 1960', in *Performance of Literature in Historical Perspectives*, ed. by David W. Thompson (New York: Lanham, 1983), pp. 301-16. Gregory Nagy's *Poetry and Performance: Homer and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) concentrates on lexical change.

Chapter 4
Intonation

The goal of this chapter is the same as that of Chapter 3: to provide a repertoire of features which may be formally important to nonmetrical poetry, and a means of judging likely occasions and nature of their occurrence. These features include nuclear tones, intonation group, key and paratone. However, the relative unfamiliarity of intonational terminology entails a slight difference of approach. Chapter 3's description of rhythmic phenomena was divided into separate accounts of their nature, and of their prediction. The same approach is followed here, but the distinction is less strictly observed: it would be impractical to describe particular features without giving some indication of the circumstances in which they might be expected to be heard.

For the sake of consistency and accuracy, initial examples and explanations are all drawn from phonetics texts, mainly Alan Cruttenden's *Intonation* and Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen's *An Introduction to English Prosody*. Other resources - poetry and studies linking poetry to intonation - are drawn on once these bases have been laid.

1 INTONATIONAL FEATURES: REPRESENTATION

A) TONES

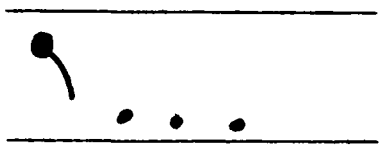
i) Introduction

As noted in Chapter 1, two competing ways of conceptualising intonational movements have dominated twentieth-century linguistics. British practice conceives of these movements as contours, and seeks to describe their overall shape in terms such as *rise, low fall, fall-rise*. In contrast, most

American linguists have described them in terms of the levels through which they pass. The notation that is today most used in the United States is called ToBI, an acronym for 'Tone and Break Index'. This analyses the pitch of the main accents within an intonational movement in terms of two levels, High and Low, and also the pitch associated with the ends of those groups, known as 'boundary tones'.[1]

Cruttenden, who favours the contours approach, illustrates the two approaches through their likely responses to one performance of the sentence *John didn't go*. A 'contours' notation is given as follows:

John didn't go[2]



As the drawing of the falling line implies, the move from a relatively high pitch on *John* to a low pitch on the subsequent syllables is analysed not in terms of the levels themselves, but in those of the movement which the speakers voice describes in moving between them. In contrast, a likely ToBI transcription of the same utterance takes the form H* L⁻L%. H* is a 'peak accent', with the accented syllable in the mid or upper part of a speaker's pitch range; L⁻ a 'low phrasal accent', and L% a 'low boundary tone'.

This thesis will approach intonation through contours, for several reasons. Working in Britain, British material is more widely available; moreover, the more transparent notation of the contours approach makes it more manageable for the nonspecialist. The contours approach has been used by many of the most interesting commentators on intonation,

---

[1]Mary E. Beckman and Gayle Ayers Elam, *Guidelines for ToBI Labelling*, version 3 (March 1997), <http://ling.ohio-state.edu/phonetics/E_ToBI/etobi_homepage.html>.
[2]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 61

including Crystal, Bolinger, and Brazil, as well as Cruttenden himself. In contrast, the ToBI approach is relatively new, with little secondary material available. It is also explicitly limited to Received Pronunciation, General American, and Australian dialects.[3]

Different ways of describing contours exist. Some analysts seek to transcribe the whole sequence of pitch movements. This is the case, for example, with Dwight Bolinger, whose examples snake across the page:

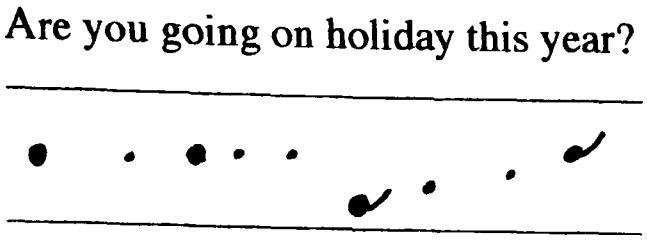
[4]

Most, however, concentrate on the nucleus - in this case, *found* - holding, in Cruttenden's words, that the nuclear tone 'involves the major part of the meaning contributed by the pitch pattern of an intonation-group'.[5] In this example, the tone can be categorised as a *fall.*

This chapter adopts the nucleus-based approach, and the sections which follow describe the different varieties of nuclear tone that have been identified. It is important to note that the labels used, such as *fall*, *rise*, and *rise-fall*, refer to the movement which begins with the beginning of the nucleus, and not to that which precedes it; the above example constitutes a fall despite the step-up before *fou-*. Moreover, the movement may extend over several syllables. In the following example, the nucleus is the syllable *hol-*, and the rise which that syllable begins continues to the end of the sentence:

---

[3]Beckman and Ayers Elam, n.p. A new British labelling protocol, IViE, is discussed in section 4, below.
[4]Bolinger, *Intonation and its Uses*, p. 72.
[5]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 50.



Nonetheless, such movements are by convention associated with the nucleus alone.

ii) Types of nuclear tone

Most analysts see a repertoire of five tones as basic to intonation in English: rise, fall, rise-fall, fall-rise, and level. They are present in the analyses of the Lancaster researchers, of Cruttenden, of Couper-Kuhlen, and of Brazil. Most also specify some sort of distinction based on pitch height, distinguishing, for example, a 'high fall' from a 'mid fall'; this refers to the starting-point of the movement. That on *Are you going on holiday this year?* may thus be considered a *low rise*.

Different levels of precision exist. Couper-Kuhlen, for example, is particularly sensitive to phonetic data, suggesting fifteen types of rise alone, whereas the Lancaster researchers simply specify 'high' or 'low' for each of the five basic tones.[6] Cruttenden, who makes the same distinction, applies it only to the simple falls and rises, since 'semantic differences do not justify' any further distinction.[7] He is thus left with seven tones, which form the basis of this section.

The most important contours are the rise and the fall. Cruttenden uses one sentence, uttered in four different ways, to illustrate their high and low forms. That sentence is a question, a choice which Cruttenden intends to

---

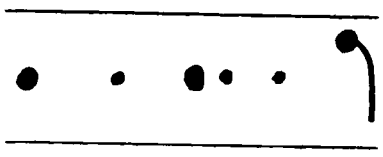
[6]Briony Williams, 'The Formulation of an Intonation Transcription System for British English', in Knowles, Wichmann and Alderson, pp. 38-60 (pp. 53-53); Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen, *An Introduction to English Prosody* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), p. 91.
[7]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 53.

challenge the once widely held belief in a particular 'question intonation'.[8] This does not affect the illustrations or the contours themselves.

The two 'falls' are as follows:

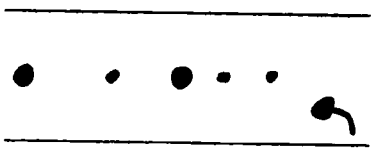
High fall

Are you going aw`ay?



Low fall

Are you going aw‸ay?



Cruttenden notes that 'both have rather "serious" overtones, the higher tone being more "involved" and the lower tone more "business-like"'.[9] The notation used is a grave accent placed before the syllable.[10] It is printed in subscript when a low fall is specified, and normally for a high fall.

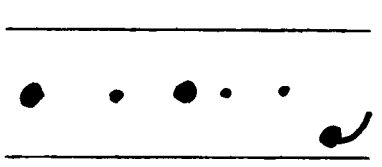
Cruttenden then moves on to rises, which he describes as 'lighter' in this context than the falls. Again, high and low types are identified:

High rise

Are you going aw´ay?

Low rise

Are you going aw‚ay?



For rises, an acute accent is used, as shown: again, it is placed in subscript when low. Cruttenden states that, of the two, the high rise sounds more casual, and makes the following observation:

> The high-rising tone on this sort of question is much more frequent in American English than in British English, which is one reason why Americans sound casual to the British; whereas the prevalence of the low-rising tone in British English is one reason why the British sound formal to Americans.[11]

---

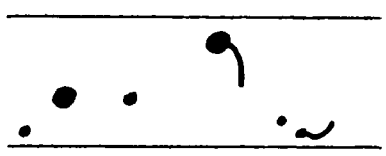
[8]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 51.
[9]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 51.
[10]Such marks are sometimes called *tonetic stress marks*.
[11]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 51.

This conveys the difference between the two rises, but also points to the need, in any attempt to link intonational form to meaning, to be sensitive to the variations that can be observed among different groups of speakers.

The four tones described so far have been 'simple' tones; whether high or low, they involve only one major change of pitch direction, a rise or a fall. 'Complex' tones, involving two such changes, are also important in English. The first of these, in Cruttenden's taxonomy, is the fall-rise:

Fall-rise

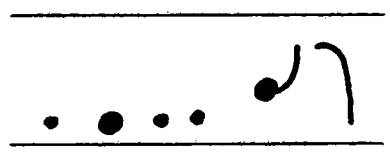
I go there ˘usually.



According to Cruttenden, this tune, which is notated by the ˘ mark, is limited to declaratives. One of its functions, which may be imagined here, is that of 'self-justification' - perhaps the speaker has been asked to account for an absence.[12] The other major complex tone is the rise-fall:

Rise-fall

He got a dis^tinction



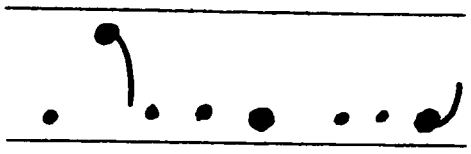
The rise-fall tone is notated with the ^ mark; one of the meanings associated with it, as in this example, is that the speaker is impressed by the facts to which the sentence refers.

It was noted above that simple tones could be 'spread' over several syllables - *Are you going on -holiday this year?* - and the above examples illustrate that the same is true of complex tones. However, complex tones

[12]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 100.

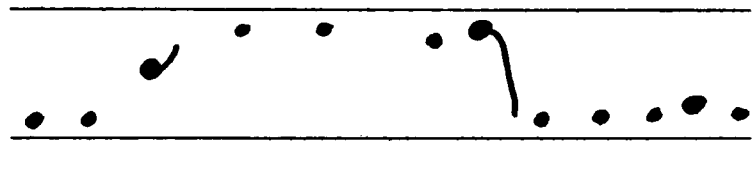
can also be 'split', with the two pitch changes associated with two separate prominent syllables.[13] Cruttenden gives the following example:

But `I didn't fail the e-xam



Although this is notated as two separate tones - a high fall followed by a low rise - the overall effect is to produce a tune similar in form and function to the fall-rise; as with the earlier *I go there ˇusually*, the tone's function here seems to be that of self-justification. Similarly 'split' or 'compound' tones are found for the rise-fall; Couper-Kuhlen gives the following example:

If he c´an then there's no `argument about it[14]



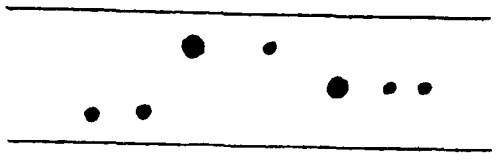
Again, the compound tone suggests the same meaning - 'impressed' - as the uncompounded version quoted earlier. The above examples all occur in single intonation groups, although Cruttenden suggests that there is a case for extending this 'compound' approach to occurrences which occur in two separate groups.[15]

The last tone which Cruttenden sees as distinctive is the level tone:

[13]Couper-Kuhlen calls such tones 'compound'. (*Introduction*, p. 98).
[14]Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, p. 100.
[15]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 76.

Level tone

When I went to >Africa...



Here, there is no pitch change on or from the nuclear syllable, which is prominent only by virtue of the pitch change leading up to it - in this example, *Af-* is lower in pitch than *to* - and by extra length and loudness.[16] It is a tone particularly characteristic of liturgical discourse, and, it has recently been suggested, of poetry-reading.[17]

The seven tones given here are those described by Cruttenden as sufficing 'for the usual level of delicacy' that is required for describing spoken English.[18] Some phoneticians suggest many more, specifying, for example a distinction between high and low fall-rises and rise-falls; others, such as Alan Brazil, suggest that the five basic tones could be reduced for some purposes to merely 'fall', 'rise', and 'level'. Cruttenden himself classes all seven of his tones, at a more general level, as either 'rises or falls'.[19] However, given the lack of work done in the field of intonation and poetry, a good starting-point is likely to be a repertoire that is richer than the most minimal, but more manageable than the richest; it can then be revised in the light of the requirements of poetry. One change will be proposed here to Cruttenden's taxonomy. This is the addition of high and low level tones, high and low (¯ and _), which are used in the transcription of the SEC corpus, and which I have found useful in describing poetry. The mid-level tone proposed by Cruttenden is retained.

---

[16]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 53; Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, p. 94.
[17]See section 3, below.
[18]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 54.
[19]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, pp. 91-103.

iii) Pre-nuclear tones

Little research has been done into the pitch accents which precede the nucleus, perhaps because, in Cruttenden's words, they 'generally serve only to modify the meaning conveyed by the nuclear tone'.[20] The syllables leading up to the nucleus are sometimes known as the *head*, and there appear to be few constraints on the shape of these syllables; according to Couper-Kuhlen, 'one can conceivably find any type head with any type nucleus'.[21] There are some patterns which are found particularly frequently, the best known of which is the 'stepping head'.[22] This contains a slowly descending series of level tones:

Stepping head

What a very silly thing to `do[23]

The small amount of research that has been carried out into the presence of this pattern in poetry is discussed below. In general, however, it seems logical to follow intonation studies in assuming the relative insignificance of pre-nuclear pitch accents, at least until the place of intonation in poetry is better understood. Where their direction is felt to be important, a tonetic stress mark will be used; in cases where only nuclei are felt to be important, such accents will be notated with the mark '.

---

[20]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 54.
[21]Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, p. 85.
[22]Kingdon (p. 3) calls this pattern the 'sober framework' of spoken English.
[23]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 54.

B) INTONATION GROUPS

Many of the examples so far quoted comprise a single sentence, with which a particular intonation contour is coterminous. However, the sentence is not the basic unit of intonation, nor that of speech planning; and in the case of poetry, the line, which may play a dominant role in the construction of a reading, is unlikely to be regularly constituted of a single sentence. In consequence, it is necessary to look elsewhere for a basic unit of intonation: a way of describing the 'chunks' of speech which, via intonation, are uttered and perceived as units within a larger linguistic and discoursal structure.

Candidates for this basic unit are multiple, and depend in large measure on the nature of the model adopted; phonological theories of intonation, for example, posit a unit that is defined by its place in the presumed phonological hierarchy. The first proposal for a unit defined phonetically was that of David Crystal, in 1969. He suggested that the principal cues for recognition of a *tone unit* were located at its boundaries: pause, the lengthening of a final syllable before the boundary, and a pitch change immediately following it. Another cue was that of internal structure: each tone unit would have one nuclear pitch movement.[24] These are terms that have been adopted by many subsequent commentators. They will be discussed here following Cruttenden, whose preferred term, *intonation group*, will be used interchangeably with Crystal's *tone unit.*

Prime among the external cues is pause, which has sometimes been proposed as the only practical cue to tone-unit boundary. Cruttenden gives several examples of utterances where pause functions in such a way. The boundaries are indicated by the virgule, /:

---

[24]Crystal, *Prosodic Systems*, pp. 204-10.

The Prince of Wales / is visiting Cardiff tomorrow

Yesterday I went to London / and saw the Queen / outside Buckingham Palace[25]

These pauses seem an unambiguous signal of intonation-group boundary. However, in other cases, pause simply reflects hesitancy:

There was a ... GOLDcrest in the garden yesterday[26]

For Cruttenden, this kind of pause indicates a word-finding difficulty, and should not be taken as a cue to tone-unit boundary. Similarly, a pause following the first word of an intonation group may constitute a 'holding operation' that allows the speaker to plan the rest of his or her sentence:

I do like Elgar's violin concerto. It's ... quite the most perfect work of its kind.[27]

Again, this cannot be taken as a cue to intonation-group boundary.

Since it may not be possible to distinguish phonetically between boundary-cueing and hesitation pauses, other cues must be referred to. One is *anacrusis*, a group of unstressed syllables at the beginning of a tone-unit which are likely to be spoken at greater speed than a comparable group occurring elsewhere. Cruttenden's example is as follows:

I saw John yesterday / and he was just off to London[28]

He suggests that the first prominent syllable in the second of these groups is likely to be *just*, and that the nonprominent ones which precede it - *and he was* - will be pronounced more quickly than nonprominent syllables elsewhere in the sentence - including, in this example, those at the end of *yesterday*. Such a quickening indicates anacrusis, which in turn indicates

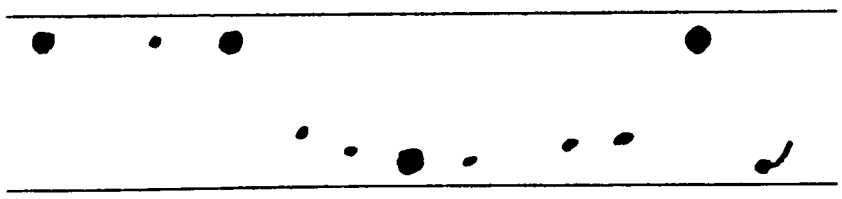
---

[25]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 31.
[26]*Ibid.*
[27]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 32.
[28]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 32.

that a new tone unit has begun. Another cue is *pre-boundary lengthening*, which occurs at the end of the tone unit. This is the phenomenon, present in many languages, whereby the final syllable in an intonation group is lengthened.[29] Suggested explanations include the possibility that it is evidence of a relaxation before the pause, that it allows the speaker to review articulation of preceding group, or that it allows the speaker to plan the next one. Like pause, however, anacrusis and lengthening may occur in conjunction with hesitation phenomena as much as with boundary.

For Cruttenden, as for Crystal, the only unambiguous boundary cue is a change of pitch on unaccented syllables. Over the course of an uttered sentence, and over the intonation groups which compose it, there is a tendency for the voice's pitch to drop. This is the phenomenon know as *declination*, or more informally as 'downdrift', and opinion is divided over its explanation. Some writers see it as a universal, explainable on physiological grounds, while others consider it a language-specific phonological feature.[30] Whatever its explanation, it is a phenomenon which is particularly noticeable in reading styles, and one of its consequences is that a speaker needs to reset his or her intonational 'baseline' at the start of each new intonational group. This resetting of the baseline will be perceptible as a change in pitch. For example, in the sentence

John's not **GO**ing tomorrow / but on **FRI**day...[31]

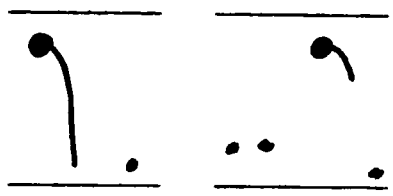


[29]Jacqueline Vaissière, 'Language-Independent Prosodic Features', in Cutler and Ladd, pp. 53-66 (p. 60).
[30]Vaissière, pp. 55-6; Ladd, *Intonational Phonology*, pp. 73-78.
[31]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 34.

the word *but*, which begins the second intonation group, will have a slightly higher pitch than the closing syllables of *tomorrow*.[32]

Cruttenden concludes, nonetheless, that boundary markers alone cannot constitute a sufficient definition of the intonation group. Intonation groups should be defined as much by what they contain as how they are delimited: for Cruttenden, the minimal structure of an intonation group is that a pitch accent be present. He distinguishes between two possible utterances of the same sentence:

John [n:] / isn't going



John [n:] isn't going[33]

In both cases, *John* is lengthened, as indicated by the colon in the mark [n:]. In the first case alone, there is a pitch movement on unaccented syllables, as the speaker 'steps up' slightly to begin the new group on *isn't*. More important, however, are internal considerations. The first example has pitch accents on both *John* and *going*, and can therefore, given the supporting presence of boundary markers, be considered to comprise two intonation groups; the second example contains only one accent, and so, despite the lengthening of *John*, comprises a single unit.

---

[32]Where a rising tone closes the first group, declination may not be audible, but the pitch change on the unaccented syllables which follow the boundary will be downwards.

[33]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 35.

Such a combination of internal and external cues allows a phonetically-defined model of the intonation group to be adopted. There are times as Cruttenden admits, that some reference to non-phonetic factors, such as syntax, may be necessary to clarify doubtful cases; in the same way, the Lancaster researchers add to their phonetic model the proviso that the boundary can only be said to be present at a point that is syntactically possible.[34] These considerations will be dealt with in section 2, where guidelines for the prediction of intonation groups are discussed.

C) KEY

Some research suggests that pitch choice at the beginning of the intonation group can play an important role in communication, setting the group's *key* in relation to those which surround it, and thereby conveying its linguistic and pragmatic place within the developing utterance. Work in this field is particularly associated with the discourse analysis of David Brazil, but its importance is also made clear by Couper-Kuhlen and, to a lesser extent, Cruttenden.[35]

There appear to be significant differences between these theorists. All agree that the key or overall pitch level of the intonation group is determined by the height of the *onset*, and all agree that the onset can be defined, in part, as the first prominent syllable in the intonation group. Yet the precise nature of that prominence is disputed. For Couper-Kuhlen,

---

[34]Williams, 'The Formulation of an Intonation Transcription System', p. 51. The Lancaster model nonetheless distinguishes, on phonetic grounds, between *major* and *minor* tone-unit boundaries. This refinement - itself a simplification of Knowles's earlier proposed taxonomy of five boundary types - has been felt to be unnecessary at this stage of research into poetic intonation.

[35]Brazil, Coulthard and Johns, pp. 23-38; David Brazil, *The Communicative Value of Intonation*, pp. 101-104; Cruttenden, *Intonation*, pp. 123-24. Couper-Kuhlen (*Introduction*, p. 102) notes that the concept of *key* was first used by Sweet.

onset is the 'first rhythmically stressed syllable' of the head.[36] In other words, it can be made prominent by intensity or duration, as well as by pitch. This definition accords with that of Crystal.[37] For Cruttenden, on the other hand, pitch is essential; he defines the onset as the 'first high accent' in the intonation group.

The distinction is a significant one. One of Couper-Kuhlen's illustrative examples is the following; the onset is noted by a preceding vertical bar, |:

|whether or not you get a hole in `one[38]

There is no high accent before the nucleus; on Cruttenden's definition, there is thus no onset. It is difficult to see how key could be determined on such a basis. In another example, Couper-Kuhlen's onset is accented, but barely:

and |then whichever hole it drops in[39]

Were Cruttenden's model followed, such an utterance would raise the question of how high |an accent must be before it is high enough to be considered a 'high accent', and thus an onset. Couper-Kuhlen's model avoids these difficulties, and also makes use of key in an extended

[36]Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, p. 81.
[37]Crystal, *Prosodic Systems*, p. 120, pp. 143-4. Brazil, Coulthard and Johns's definition of prominence is ambiguous, but is primarily pitch-based (pp. 42-3), which implies a pitch-based definition for onset also.
[38]Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, p. 85. Some notation omitted.
[39]Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, p. 85. Some notation omitted.

discussion of *paratone*, drawn on below. For these reasons, it will be preferred in this thesis to that of Cruttenden.

The main function of key is relatively undisputed: it serves to signal the relationship of the material in the intonation group which it introduces to that in the group which has just been uttered. High key, signalled by high onset, signals to the listener that a new or unexpected topic is being introduced. Low key, on the contrary, suggests that the material about to be presented is discoursally subordinate to what has just been said. In the following example, taken from a discussion by David Brazil, the second group of words is in low key:

> // ONly a SMALL number of people // SOMEthing like HALF // ACtually turned UP //[40]

Its function, for Brazil, is to show that the term *a small number* is about to be parenthetically explained; that 'something like half' is not a new element in the narrative, independently selected.

In this thesis, when a performance is analysed for the distribution of key, a bold-face *h*, *m* or *l* will be placed, in brackets, at the beginning of each intonation group, corresponding respectively to high, mid and low keys. For example:

> / **[h]** even nOw, / **[l]** I tEll myself, / **[m]** there is a lAnguage[41]

This is one possible reading of a line by Geoffrey Hill. The first syllable of *even* is pitched high, as the group which it begins introduces a major new topical orientation, and is thus in high key. The reporting clause, on the other hand, is given a low key, suitable to its parenthetical position within the sentence.

---

[40]Brazil, p. 160. In Brazil's notation, capitals denote an accent, and underlining denotes the nucleus.
[41]Geoffrey Hill, *The Triumph of Love* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), p. 18.

D) PARATONE

One of the most useful insights to have resulted from research into declination, discussed in section B, is the realisation that it operates over whole series of intonation groups, and thereby links them together. The result of these links is, it has been suggested, to create *pitch sequences* or *paratones*, intonational units which may structure speech in the way that sentences and paragraphs structure written texts.[42]

The fullest account of paratone currently available is by Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen, who draws on George Yule's suggestion that two different kinds of paratone may be identified.[43] One, the *major paratone*, is coterminous with the major thematic subdivisions, or 'conceptual paragraphs', which make up an utterance. It is defined by the exceptionally high onset with which it begins, and its use can be most clearly heard in radio news bulletins: the beginning of each item, and subsequent changes of topic within it, are likely to be marked by the beginning of a new major paratone. Major paratones typically, but not obligatorily, end with a fall to low in the speaker's pitch range, and a long pause.

This extract illustrates the use of major paratones in a news-reading context:

> the chairman of Oxfam / Sir Geoffrey Wilson / has said the charity raised a record / nine point seven million pounds / last year / two million pounds more / than in 1977 /
>
> and at the same time / it managed to reduce / its administrative costs / Sir Geoffrey / speaking to the Oxfam annual meeting / described this / as a very real achievement / he went on to say / it was likely that Oxfam / would be asked more frequently / to become involved / with sensitive issues / but its response / must always be to need / irrespective / of the local political climate /[44]

---

[42]An early discussion of this phenomenon is Crystal, *Prosodic Systems*, p. 144. The term 'pitch sequence' is suggested by Brazil, Coulthard and Johns, p. 61; the more widely used 'paratone by Gillian Brown, *Listening to Spoken English* (London: Longman, 1977), p. 86.

[43]Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, pp. 189-95; George Yule, 'Speakers' Topics and Major Paratones', *Lingua*, 52 (1980), 33-47.

[44]Adapted from Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, pp. 190-91.

The two major paratones together correspond to a single news item; as can be seen, the second begins at the point where a new topical orientation is signalled by the word *and*. It is interesting to note that in written discourse, a new paragraph would probably not have begun at that point, but slightly later - perhaps on *Sir Geoffrey*. That this is not the case here indicates one difference in the level of planning that is possible in spoken English, even scripted, and in written English. It also demonstrates the advantage of a unit that is defined purely phonetically; the two paratones are described as such because the onsets which begin them - on, respectively, *chair* and *and* - have an exceptionally high pitch.

The *minor paratone* lies at a level of structure between the major paratone, which it subdivides according to local communicative needs, and the intonation group, sequences of which it comprises. It may begin with any onset height, since it is defined by the way in which it ends: with an obligatory fall to low in the speaker's pitch range. However, the choice of onset height will affect the meaning communicated. Onset height signals key within the single intonation group, and communicates information about the group's likely contents; it does the same for the minor paratones which such groups may begin.

Couper-Kuhlen suggests the following classification:

a) minor paratones that begin with high onset: these are those that begin major paratones, with the same high onset signalling both;

b) minor paratones that begin with mid onset: these represent paratactic additions to or extensions of what precedes;

c) minor paratones that begin low - these represent hypotactic subordinations to or inclusions in what precedes.

In this thesis, it is proposed to adapt the marks which were suggested for the use of key - the letters *h*, *m*, and *l* - as notations for paratone. Where an

intonation group follows a low termination, and a new minor paratone therefore begins, the letter denoting key will be capitalised. It may also be placed before the virgule which marks the first intonation-group boundary of the paratone.

The example which Couper-Kuhlen gives to illustrate the use of minor paratone is as follows, with these notations added:

> **[H]** / the former Labour cabinet minister // Mr Tony Benn // has called for a reduction // in what he called the excessive powers // of British Prime Ministers //
>
> **[M]** / Mr Benn // in a speech in Bristol // said the powers of the Prime Minister // combined with the job of party leader // were so great // that they amounted // to a system of personal rule //
>
> **[L]** / he said the Prime Minister // should be made more accountable //
>
> **[M]** / among other things // Labour MPs // should elect all Labour spokesmen in Parliament // and Cabinet ministers in Government //
>
> **[M]** / and Mr Benn added / that the patronage in power // of the office of Prime Minister // should be reduced // to avoid the present // centralization of power // in the hands of one person[45]

Five minor paratones combine in this passage, and together make up a major paratone. Couper-Kuhlen explains their function in accordance with the principles given above. The only high-onset minor paratone signals the beginning of the major paratone, corresponding as a whole to the first major 'chunk' of a news item; the three mid-onset minor paratones contain material that expand upon or add to the information given in the preceding minor paratone; the only low-onset minor paratone has the function of a parenthetical explanation, subordinate to the material that has immediately preceded it.

These explanations are, to a certain extent, speculative, but it is important to note that the paratones themselves are defined purely phonetically. The onset levels described above as high, mid or low are

---

[45]Adapted from Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, pp. 193-94.

determined independently of the theory which they are used to support. On the basis of her results, Couper-Kuhlen argues that:

> the role of intonation in the segmentation and hierarchical organization of texts can [...] be regarded as provisionally established.[46]

The value of paratone to poetry criticism remains to be demonstrated. Nonetheless, it extends the range of possible critical response in a way that may prove helpful.

2 INTONATIONAL FEATURES: PREDICTION

As was discussed in Chapter 1, several critics have posited a role for intonation in free verse, but none has had a coherent model of the ways in which particular passages or texts may be performed with particular intonational characteristics, be they intonation groups or specified nuclear tones. The prediction of intonation is a difficult area, and one whose difficulty may, in the long run, prove that the role of intonation in the performance of English-language poetry is too unpredictable ever to constitute a significant formal response. However, that difficulty is not so great as to rule out discussion and experiment.

In the previous section, the tones were described and defined largely in terms of their attitudinal associations. While such associations may well be important to a reading of poetry, there is little to be gained from providing a more detailed account of them. In the first place, there is little agreement about how tones should be grouped on such a basis; Couper-Kuhlen prints a table showing what she calls the 'heterogeneity and inadequacy' of past approaches, and argues that the entire area needs to be reconsidered in the light of a rigorous 'theory of emotion', and a clear distinction between

---

[46]Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, p. 195.

intonational features, such as tone choice, and paralinguistic aspects of speech such as voice quality.[47] Furthermore, there is little reason to suggest that attitudinal factors are sufficiently controllable by the poetic text to make the intonational contours that result from them worthy of formal analysis.

More stable, and more likely to be material to the formal patterning of poetry, is the relationship of tone choice to syntax and discourse structure. It is more useful to be aware that level tones only occur in sentence non-final position, for example, and have associations with ritualised performance, than to know that they may be associated with boredom or sarcasm - particularly since the latter observation may bear an indirect relationship to the former.[48] It is via this angle of approach, therefore, that an attempt to link tones to text will be suggested in this section. The basic framework is that of Cruttenden, who in turn draws on the corpus work of Altenberg; more detailed accounts exist, but are less suitable for the limited goals of this chapter.[49]

A further proviso concerns the level of precision which is appropriate here. In section 1, nine tones were described, and models which proposed a reduction of tonal categories to two or three tones were provisionally rejected. The needs of prediction, however, are slightly different, and these reduced categories are in the first instance adopted here.

Finally, a difference must be noted between the structure of this section, and the corresponding section in Chapter 3. In that section, the general model of prominence prediction was relatively complex. The influences of discourse and activity type - notably those of the ritualised status of poetry-reading - were therefore considered separately. In this

---

[47]Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, pp. 180, 185.
[48]The association of level tone with sarcasm is made by Crystal, *Prosodic Systems*, p. 216.
[49]E.g. Paul Tench, *The Intonation Systems of English* (London: Cassell, 1996).

chapter, the general model is much less complete, which makes such a separation less essential. As a result, although some general stylistic comments are placed after the main discussion, those which relate to the influence on intonation of specific textual and poetic phenomena, such as punctuation and linebreak, are integrated into the main body of the discussion. Illustrative examples are, as in Chapter 3, drawn from poetry, but the relative unfamiliarity of intonation rules out the method used previously. Instead of positing performances on the basis of a printed text, the priority in this chapter is to point to performances by other readers, and suggest why a certain feature may be present. Where studies of a particular feature exist, and transcribe its presence in a given reading, I use those transcriptions; in other cases, I have made my own.

A) NUCLEAR TONES

i) Falls

In the broad category 'falls', Cruttenden includes high fall (˴), low fall (˩), and rise-fall (^). All three are associated with completeness or conclusiveness, and are commonly found in declarative sentences, where, according to David Brazil, they are used in telling the speaker 'something he didn't already know'.[50] In other syntactic contexts, such as imperatives, falls may sound rather abrupt; Bolinger suggests that British speakers of English, for example, will say *come ˩on* to a dog but *come ˊon* to a fellow human being.[51] Within declaratives, they are commonly found on sentence-final intonation groups, as in examples (1) and (2), below; a further typical usage is in adverbials which reinforce the message of the main clause, as in (3):

---

[50]Brazil, Coulthard and Johns, p. 16.
[51]Bolinger, *Intonation and its Uses*, p. 32.

(1) He stayed for three ˎhours
(2) What a fi^nale!
(3) `Literally / he banged his head against the `wall[52]

The choice between different falls is, as stated in section 1, in large part a matter of expressive nuance, and one that from the point of view of prediction is complicated by dialectal differences.

Falls include some of the most common of all English tones; in one transcription of the Lancaster sample, for example, the high fall alone constituted 36% of all tone movements.[53] In poetic texts, there is no reason to doubt that the same is true. Indeed, one study of poetic intonation, by Prudence Byers, has suggested that a falling tone - more precisely, a simple fall - is selected particularly readily in poetry-reading. It found that 65% of tones in the readings which she analysed were simple falls; in comparison, the samples of conversation showed a proportion of 51%. Byers suggests that there may be two reasons for this: falling tones may be cued by line-break, and by a perception of formality or seriousness in the text to be read. Her study showed that a high proportion of lines constituted a single intonation group; the nucleus of such a group, falling at line-end, was particularly likely to be felt as 'conclusive' by the speaker. Since the falling tone is relatively unmarked, attitudinally, Byers suggests that it is especially suitable to 'the semantic ambiguity that is traditionally characteristic of poetry'.[54] A further finding, which supports this assertion, is that falling nuclei are more common in what Byers calls 'meditative' poetry than in 'conversational' poetry.[55]

---

[52]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, pp. 92, 95.
[53]Knowles, Wichmann and Alderson, p. 116. The rise-fall, on the other hand, was found to be extremely rare.
[54]Byers, 'A Formula', p. 373.
[55]*Ibid.*, p. 379.

Examples of falling tone within poetry can be found in the next section, which concludes with the notation of a reading by Muriel Rukeyser of a brief passage of her own work.

ii) Rises

In explaining their respective functions, Cruttenden groups together high-rise (˝), low-rise (˧), and fall-rise (˘) tones. He also includes level tone in this group, because 'it is generally commutable with them in similar contexts and with similar meanings'.[56] In this discussion, level tone is nonetheless treated separately, because of its particular importance to poetry. These contexts and meanings are divided by Cruttenden into two main categories, associated with dependent and independent clauses respectively. Dialectal differences are particularly marked in the use of rises, which in the dialects of northern England, Glasgow and Northern Ireland (but not the Republic) may function as do falls elsewhere; one commentator has recently suggested that the use of rising tones in declaratives may be 'a trace of the Viking occupation of Britain'.[57] These questions are explored in section 3, below; in this discussion, the usage described is that found in R.P. and General American.

In dependent clauses, rising tones are associated with discoursal subordination. They are most frequently found in sentence non-final intonation groups, where they signal to the listener that the pitch sequence is incomplete - that there is 'more to come'. This function is found in co-ordinate clauses which describe an aspect of an action that is also described

---

[56]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 93. Couper-Kuhlen (*Introduction*, p. 94) points out that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish a level from a rising tone auditorily.

[57]Daniel Hirst, 'Intonation in British English', in *Intonation Systems: A Survey of Twenty Languages*, ed. by Daniel Hirst and Albert Di Cristo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 56-77 (p. 73).

in the clause that follows (examples 4 and 5, below), in dependent subordinate clauses (example 6, below), in main clauses which are informationally dependent on a subordinate clause (7), and in adverbials which limit the information in the main clause (8):

(4) He took the ˏcar / and drove it to `London
(5) She's twenty-eight years ˏold / and thinking of starting a `family
(compare: *She's twenty-eight years `old / and lives in East `Grinstead*)

(6) Because I hadn't had any ˇaspirins / I felt a bit `better
(7) I felt a bit ˇbetter / because I hadn't taken any `aspirins
(8) Last ˇspring / we managed to get away to `Paris
(compare *`Literally / he banged his head against the `wall*, above)[58]

In each of these examples, a rise in the first intonation group creates the expectation of a fall in the second; as discussed in subsection (iv), below, the move from rise to fall is the most common of all tonal sequences in English.

In independent clauses, the use of a rise suggests what Cruttenden calls a 'listener-oriented' utterance. This includes, for example, yes-no interrogatives (example 8), and declaratives that express reservations (9):

(8) Are you coming to the ˏmeeting tonight?
(9) I like his ˇwife (although I can't stand him)[59]

The use of rises in such a way resembles Brazil's description of the function of high termination as a requests for 'adjudication' from the listener.[60] This describes well the phenomenon known as 'uptalk', where the speaker uses a rising tone on a declarative to seeks confirmation that he or she has the attention or the assent of his or her listener. Bolinger

---

[58]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, pp. 95-96.
[59]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, pp. 99, 100. The link between questions and intonation is discussed in Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, pp. 148-151, 169-172.
[60]David Brazil, *A Grammar of Speech* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 246.

associates it with the American South, although it is certainly far from limited to the United States:

(10) (Where are you from?) From ˆTexas.[61]

Uptalk is sometimes suggested by novelists - not, as far as I know, by poets - through the use of the question mark.[62]

Apart from questions of dialect, the difference between the high and low simple rises is explained by Cruttenden largely in terms of stylistic choice, and resembles the difference between high and low falls. The low-rise is more formal; the high-rise, more casual. The fall-rise has other associations. It appears in phrases and clauses whose force depend on pragmatic considerations of contrast and emphasis:

(11) ˇUsually / he comes on `Sundays
(12) Of `course / if you do it ˇthat way / it won't `work

According to Cruttenden, it is also frequently used in noun-phrase subjects that have been assigned their own intonation group, particularly when the contrastive nature of the subject is being emphasised:

(13) Private ˇenterprise / is always efˇficient / whereas public ˎownership / means `inefficiency.

It will be suggested below that noun-phrase subjects are particularly likely to take their own intonation group in a poetic context.

Use of many of the tones discussed so far in this section, including rises and falls, is illustrated in the following brief transcription of a reading by Muriel Rukeyser. The extract is the first stanza of her 'The Poem as

---

[61]Dwight Bolinger, 'Intonation in American English', in Hirst and Cristo, pp. 45-55 (p. 55). Other studies find it widespread in Australia and, via Australian soap operas, in Britain; Cruttenden (*Intonation*, p. 130) associates it with 'New Yuppies'.
[62]It is a habit of Dixon, the County Durham surveyor, in Thomas Pynchon's *Mason and Dixon* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1997), e.g. pp. 248-49.

Mask: Orpheus' (1968), as performed by her in a recording released in 1977:

/ When I wrote of the ˇwomen / in their `dances and `wildness, / it was a ˄mask, /
on their ˇmountain, /ˆ god-hunting, / `singing, / in `orgy, /
it was a ˄mask; / when I ´wrote of the ˇgod, /
ˇfragmented, / `exiled from him´self, / his ´life, / the ´love gone down with ¯song, /
it was my˖self, / `split open, / `unable to `speak, / in `exile from my`self. /[63]

Rukeyser's choice of tones accords at many points with the account given so far. Rising tones are used to signal incompleteness, both at the beginning of the shorter pitch sequences (ll. 1-2, ll. 3-4), and repeatedly within the longer one (ll. 4-7), while falling tones signal finality, most strikingly at the end of the stanza. Falls are also present within pitch sequences. This pattern of tones, some cued by discourse structure, and others apparently not, form an extremely harmonious pattern, and one which adds greatly to the effectiveness of the stanza.

iii) Level tone

In finding the function of level tones to be broadly similar to that of rises, Cruttenden's analysis is in accord with that of other commentators, including Couper-Kuhlen and, as Couper-Kuhlen points out, Henry Sweet.[64] Nonetheless, the level tone does appear to have certain particularities, which make it of particular interest to poetry criticism.

Of all tones, level tone is that which seems to have the least attitudinal or emotional force. Brazil, Coulthard and Johns refer to it as the 'neutral'

---

[63]*The Collected Poems of Muriel Rukeyser* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978), p. 435; The Poetry and Voice of Muriel Rukeyser. Cassette. Caedmon CDL5 1536. 1977. Where Rukeyser reads 'god-hunting', the text has 'gold-hunting'.
[64]Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, p. 94.

tone, while Cruttenden notes that, in contrast to the rises, its only function appears to be the signalling of non-finality - it never occurs in sentence-final position. This apparent emotional neutrality may account for some of the level tone's generic associations. Crystal and Davy noted in 1969, for example, that it is the tone most associated with prayer, and liturgical language in general.[65] Recent work by Anne Wichmann has confirmed this analysis, and extended it to poetry, where level tone seems to be even more prevalent.

In the poetic performances analysed by Wichmann, 34% of all tones were level; in liturgy, 30%, and in reportage, 18%.[66] Although detailed analysis is limited to one poem, Henry Newbolt's 'The Nightjar', Wichmann's findings are very suggestive. She divides 'The Nightjar', for the purposes of analysis, into three parts, fulfilling, respectively, narrative, rhetorical and lyrical functions. Of the three, it is the lyrical passage that displays the highest proportion of level tones, in lines such as the following:

(15) / ¯So ˷wonderful she ·was / her ¯wings / the ·wings of `night /
But `powdered / ¯here and _there / with ¯tiny ·golden ˷clouds[67]

For Wichmann, the association of level tone with prayer and lyric poetry derives from the peculiar relationship that both activities have with their hearer. When a minister leads his or her congregation, the addressee of the 'message' is not the listeners, but someone or something unseen; when a lyrical passage of poetry is read aloud, the 'message' - although not the performance - is again directed elsewhere than to the listeners, who are in

---

[65]David Crystal and Derek Davy, *Investigating English Style* (London: Longmans, Green, 1969), p. 159.
[66]Wichmann, 'Prosodic Style', p. 176.
[67]Knowles, Williams and Taylor, p. 195. The Lancaster transcriptions mark non-pitch prominences with a dot, where this thesis underlines.

fact drawn primarily into an association with the speaker. Wichmann suggests that the prosodic features common to prayer and poetry, including level tone, 'appear thus to be associated with performing, rather than informing'.[68] David Brazil makes a similar suggestion; for him, the use of level tone generally implies 'a temporary disengagement from [...] [a] person-to-person relationship'.[69] Its effect in ritualised contexts such as poetry-reading is

> to mark the matter of the reading as *not* an attempted dramatization of a situated and person-to-person communication, but as an explicitly non-interactive presentation of whatever the content may be.[70]

Whether level tone predominates in reading of a given poem will, it seems, depend to a great extent on the extent to which that poem encourages this kind of non-interactive performance; for Brazil, 'this is one among the many variables that the poet is able, through the reader, to manipulate'.[71] In other words, the presence of level tone may follow from the choice of a 'reading', as opposed to a 'conversational' performance style.

iv) Tonal sequences

Nuclear tones in successive intonation groups sometimes seem to cohere into a single unit. In an interesting discussion of these sequences, Couper-Kuhlen implies that they follow similar cohesive principles to those of rhythmic grouping. Some display the intonational *alternation* of rises and falls:

---

[68]Wichmann, p. 187.
[69]Brazil, *A Grammar of Speech*, p. 244.
[70]Brazil, 'Listening to People Reading', p. 215.
[71]Brazil, 'Listening to People Reading', p. 236.

> Because the rise has the subtle, quasi-musical effect of demanding a 'resolution', which is however 'postponed' until the next tone-unit, the two units are joined more closely' than, say, fall-rise.[72]

The most common sequence in English, according to Cruttenden, is of this sort: a rising tone on a non-final group, followed by a falling tone on a final group. Other sequences of tones display a *succession* of identical or similar events. Such sequences can contribute much to an utterance's cohesiveness, and give texture to bigger units such as the minor paratone.

The value of such sequences to poetry remains untested. Clearly, such phonetic cues to cohesiveness may be important to a poem's form, as well as influencing tone choices in cases where a sequence may be constructed. Moreover, David Crystal has shown that it is one of the characteristics of poetry read aloud that prosodic contours tend to repeat from line to line; an alternating sequence would seem particularly likely to recur in this way.[73] Such a sequence, once established, might play a considerable part in the perception of a poem's phonetic 'shape'. In Chapter 1, Jan Mukarovsky's early work on poetic intonation was discussed; one of his observations was that:

> Si, en lisant un poème, nous en observons l'intonation, ce que nous remarquons tout de suite, c'est la répétition obstinée d'un schème, revenant avec chaque vers, quelle qu'en soit l'organisation syntaxique et sémantique. Il est évident qu'il y aura des variations au cours du poème, mais le schème subsistera en son essence du premier vers au dernier.[74]

Tonal sequences, as Couper-Kuhlen describes them, may create the impression of just such a scheme. Returning to the performance by Muriel Rukeyser, for example, it is notable that a single tonal sequence recurs - a move from rise to low fall, with variations.

---

[72]Couper-Kuhlen, *Introduction*, p. 196.
[73]Crystal, 'Intonation and Metrical Theory', p. 123. Byers, 'A Formula', pp. 374-5, notes that intonation groups in a given reading of a poem tend to resemble each other in length as well as in tonal structure.
[74]Mukarovsky, p. 157.

B) PRE-NUCLEAR TONES

As stated in section 1, tone choice in the head is relatively disregarded within intonation studies, but one pattern, the 'stepping head', is sometimes cited as the most common in English. Byers's study notes that this pattern, which she calls 'simple falling unit melody', is found much more frequently in poetry than in conversation. It seem likely that its prevalence is closely linked to the preponderance of level tones in poetic performance described in subsection (ii), above, since it is level tones which are most commonly used in the stepping head.

C) INTONATION GROUPS

i) Syntactic and discoursal cues to intonation-group boundary

Perhaps the simplest means to intonation-group prediction is that suggested by theorists who would equate the intonation group with a single unit of information. This was first proposed by Halliday, although he is careful also to note the intonation group's relationship to syntax, and is the basis of the explanation of intonation group given in Quirk and others' *Comprehensive Grammar*.[75] A clear account of the logic of this approach is given by Wallace Chafe:

> There are apparently strong constraints on the amount of information that can be active in a person's mind at any one time, as well as on the length of time a particular item of information can remain active. What is 'active' can be thought of as being in the focus of a person's consciousness [...] or in what has traditionally been called 'short-term memory.' If we look at spoken language in this perspective, we find that it is produced in a series of spurts, or 'intonation units,' each of which typically contains about five words in English, and typically takes about two seconds to utter. [...] It is natural to view an intonation unit as a

---

[75]Halliday, *Intonation and Grammar*, pp. 21-22; Quirk and others, *Comprehensive Grammar*, p. 1356.

> linguistic expression of the particular information that is active in the speaker's mind at the time it is uttered.[76]

This association between intonation and information is useful in the understanding of the intonation group. For predictive purposes, however, it is the linguistic expression of the information that may be more helpful, especially in the context of reading, as opposed to spontaneous speech. Particular syntactic units, in particular discursive or lexical contexts, have strong correlations with the determination of intonation-group boundaries. These may be briefly summarised.

The simplest syntactic influence on intonation-group placement is the clause. One early study found that 50% of all intonation group boundaries coincided with sentence and clause boundaries, and several theorists describe this as the 'neutral' case.[77] Cruttenden gives the following examples, reflecting clauses in a simple, a compound and a complex sentence:

(15) Let's have another `question /
(16) He ran to the ˎstation / and caught the `train /
(17) Because he ran to the ˎstation / he `caught the train /[78]

If the clause is the most frequent syntactic correlate of intonation group, it is far from being the only one. In some cases, a single intonation group contains more than one clause; for example, two short clauses of the type reported plus reporting, or conditioned plus conditional, will typically be combined in this way:

---

[76]Wallace Chafe, 'Writing in the Perspective of Speaking', in *Studying Writing: Linguistic Approaches*, ed. by Charles R. Cooper and Sidney Greenbaum (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986), pp. 12-39 (pp. 14-15).
[77]Randolph Quirk and others, 'Studies in the Correspondence of Prosodic to Grammatical Features in English', in Randolph Quirk, *Essays on the English Language: Medieval and Modern* (London: Longman, 1968), pp. 120-35 (p. 131); Halliday, p. 19; Tench, pp. 31-32.
[78]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 56.

(18) / He said he couldn't `come /
(19) / I will if I `can /

More frequently, however, the reverse is true, and a single clause is divided among more than one intonation group; this particularly likely in poetry-reading, where the tempo of speech is frequently slower than in other contexts.

The division of the clause among more than one intonation group is particularly likely in certain syntactic and discoursal contexts. Perhaps the most significant is the assignment of a separate intonation group to a noun-phrase subject. This is particularly likely when the subject is relatively lengthy (example 20), and when the subject is 'topicalised' - presented in such a way as to re-orient the discourse towards a new area (21):

(20) / The first man on the ˏmoon / was Neil `Armstrong /
(21) / Mr ˏWhite / wants to ˏknow / whether you would welcome an end to the ˏmyth / that private ˇenterprise / is always efˇficient / and public ˏownership / means `inefficiency. /[79]

Another type of phrase that is frequently assigned its own intonation group is the adverbial:

(22) / During the last four ˇyears / private ˇenterprise / in the United ˇKingdom / [...]

(23) / Richard has re`signed / oˇfficially /[80]

Parenthetical structures such as vocatives (24) and nouns in apposition (25) may also receive their own intonation group

(24) ˇJohnny / will you just shut `up /

---

[79]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 70. The *Comprehensive Grammar* notes the tendency to place a comma after a lengthy noun-phrase subject: **The newspaper article on the recent conflict, was utterly misleading* (Quirk and others, p, 1606).
[80]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 69.

(25) Mr ˇGreen / the ˇbutcher / 's become the new chairman of the Parent-`Teachers Association /

Finally, a speaker's desire to bring special emphasis to his or her utterance can lead to its division into as many groups as is practical:

(26) / -de / -national / -i / `sation /

Intonation-group boundary placement thus responds to a variety of cues, including those of syntax, discourse structure and rhetoric. In the reading aloud of text, these general preferences interact with more context-specific cues. In any such reading, there is likely to be a certain amount of punctuation; in any versified poem, there will be linebreak. Both of these features have consequences for performance.

ii) Punctuation

The influence of punctuation in non-poetic contexts is varied. The Lancaster researchers examine all punctuation marks, and ascribe slightly different effects to each according to context: a semi-colon is likely to cue a minor boundary when used to separate items in a list, and a major boundary when separating clauses.[81] Such a precise codification is unnecessary in the approach to poetry. According to more than one study, readers of poetry almost always see punctuation as a cue to intonation-group boundary and pause; on every occasion, in a study by Byers of a variety of readers, and 98% of the time, according to a study of the poet Seamus Heaney reading his own work.[82] No study, as far as I know, has investigated the response to texts which use punctuation in an unusual way,

---

[81]As stated in section 2, above, the distinction between minor and major boundaries is not one observed in this thesis.

[82]Donna A. Van De Water and Daniel C. O'Connell, 'In and About the Poetic Line', *Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society*, 23 (1985), 397-400.

such as those of Charles Olson, and for such poems no generalisations can be made. In other cases, punctuation can be taken as a strong cue both to intonation-group boundary and to pause.

iii) Linebreak

The phonetic consequences of linebreak constitute a very difficult problem, and one which approaches the central issues of free-verse prosody. Many nonmetrical poets claim linebreak as a principal formal resource, but the extent to which linebreak may be interpreted as an intonational cue of some kind must be assumed to affect this resource's nature and value.[83] If linebreak is seen as an intonational cue of some kind, it can be adjudged a device with aural consequences. If not, its value must be looked for elsewhere, and other approaches to form - visual or informational - considered.

This is a difficult area to investigate, for several reasons, of which two stand out. On the one hand, a single sample of readers, or of poems, cannot be assumed to be representative of all. The fragmentation of the 'reading public' into a cluster of smaller interpretive communities is particularly marked where modern and contemporary poetry is concerned. The relationship between poets, poems and readerships is an extremely complex one, which may well have pragmatic consequences that cause deviation from generally-observed tendencies; it is therefore conceivable, albeit always remaining to be demonstrated, that particular poets are performed in particular contexts in significantly different ways, and that

---

[83]Three samplings of contemporary poets' statements on the line are 'The Line: A Poets' Symposium', ed. by Rory Holscher and Robert Schulz, *Epoch*, 29 (1980), 161-224; *The Line in Postmodern Poetry*, ed. by Robert Frank and Henry Sayre (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); 'The Poetic Line: A Symposium', in *A Field Guide to Contemporary Poetry and Poetics*, ed. by Stuart Friebert, David Walker and David Young, rev. edn (Oberlin: Oberlin College Press, 1997), pp. 75-94.

Robert Creeley - the example quoted in Chapter 2 - has indeed built an audience who pause and breathe after every line. On the other hand, it is difficult to analyse linebreak in isolation. Listening to recorded readings, and comparing recordings with texts, it is relatively simple to make a comparison of the relationship between linebreak and intonation-group boundary in each case. Yet such an observation would not isolate linebreak as a cue, since it would be necessary to include consideration of the co-occurrence of linebreak with other cues to boundary, such as those discussed above. Different poets vary widely in this respect, and knowledge of those cues is itself far from perfect.

The most phonetically precise investigation of this area is probably that of Tom Barney, whose Masters dissertation was written as a student of Gerry Knowles, one of the Lancaster researchers.[84] Barney posited three levels of enjambment; weak and medium, where there is some discontinuity in the syntax, such that linebreak is not in great conflict with this important intonational cue, and strong, where the syntax is strongly cohesive across the linebreak - for example, where a simple noun-phrase is divided between lines. It is this 'strong' case, therefore, which can illustrate the aural consequences of linebreak per se; since the syntax does not indicate any interruption, any that is observed must be ascribed to the linebreak. Testing for the phonetic correlates of his categories, Barney found that strong enjambments were not reflected in pitch; there was no group boundary present, and no other pitch discontinuity. On the other hand, there was sometimes a very brief pause. Linebreak would therefore appear to be interpreted as a temporal cue, if not as an intonational one.

---

[84]Its findings are summarised in Tom Barney, 'Phonetics and the Empirical Study of Poetry', in *Empirical Approaches to Literature and Aesthetics*, ed. by Roger J. Kreuz and Mary Sue MacNealy (Norwood: Ablex Publishing, 1996), 309-28 (pp. 322-27).

However, Barney's sample was limited to metrical poetry - to single recordings of Philip Larkin and John Betjeman reading their own work - and these results may not be applicable to free verse. The role of metre is particularly interesting, given Barney's discussion of his findings:

> My speculation is that ... the pause is the exponent of the meter and the continuous pitch contour that of the grammar.[85]

Thus, where the grammar is continuous, pitch is continuous, while any pause that is present in a strong enjambment derives not from the presence of linebreak, but from the rhythmic needs of a performance of metrical verse.[86]

This finding suggests that the cueing powers of linebreak in nonmetrical poetry are very weak; on the other hand, it may be the case that readers compensate for the absence of metre by making linebreak a genuinely strong cue. The only instrumental study of the question, made by Prudence Byers, suggests that the former is true.[87] Byers constructed a dummy poem, based on James Dickey's 'Pines', in which the word 'sound' appeared as a noun in six different sets of circumstances:

> Low-cloudly it whistles,
> Overdrawing the only ear with
> Suspended sound[1], the sound[2] of tree-voice
> Drawn in long lines through the air,
> Ripe, repentant sound[3]
> Of distant-running heels, the sound[4]
> Of sighing breathed through needle-eyes,
> Lightened and suspended sound[5] of fleeing ankle wings.
> Justice is exciting in the wind,
> An ax hurling toward resplendent sound,[6]
> The all-comers coming and fleeing
> From hear-you and pine, all pine.

---

[85]Barney, 'Phonetics and the Empirical Study of Literature', p. 326.
[86]Reuven Tsur makes a similar point: *Poetic Rhythm*, p. 449.
[87]Prudence P. Byers, 'The Auditory Reality of the Verse Line', *Style*, 17 (1983), 27-36.

Sound appears here as (1) at a punctuated tone-unit boundary, but not at line-end; (6) at a punctuated tone-unit boundary, but at line end; (3) at an unpunctuated tone-unit boundary and at line-end; (5) at an unpunctuated tone-unit boundary, but not at line-end; (4) not at a tone-unit boundary, but at line-end; (2) at neither a tone-unit boundary nor at line-end. Byers recorded performances of this text by eighteen speakers described as 'experienced poetry readers', and analysed the different characteristics of each occurrence of the word 'sound'.[88] She looked for the boundary markers of vowel lengthening, lower initial pitch, wider pitch range, increased probability of falling tone, and pause, and asked whether verse line-end produced any of these in the absence of other boundaries, or significantly increased it in their presence:

> The answer, overall, is no. A vowel not at the end of a tone-unit is no longer, wider, lower, likely to be a falling tone or to be followed by pause if it is at line-end (vowel #4) than if it is line-internal (vowel #2). The same thing applies in almost every respect to both punctuated and unpunctuated unit-terminal vowels. In virtually no case are the boundary features of such vowels significantly increased or altered by their coincidence with line-end.[89]

Reservations must be expressed; eighteen readers form a small sample, a dummy poem is perhaps not the best resource, and it is possible that the features for which Byers tests do not include all that may be relevant.[90] However, her study suggests that, at the very least, linebreak's power to act as an intonational cue cannot be taken for granted. In many cases, it may have no phonetic consequences whatsoever.

That linebreak may have no direct phonetic consequences does not mean that it is formally null. For example, it can call attention to other cues, and make it more likely that they be observed. Byers's study does

---

[88]Byers, 'The Auditory Reality of the Verse Line', p. 29.
[89]Byers, 'The Auditory Reality of the Verse Line', p. 30.
[90]In particular, she does not consider what happens on the syllable which follows the linebreak.

not allow for syntactic constituents, such as the noun-phrase subject, that have a variable relationship to intonation group. She does not reveal, for example, whether the noun-phrase subject boundary which coincides with linebreak (no. 3) is performed any differently from that which does not (no. 5). Nor does the dummy poem include a much shorter noun-phrase subject, of the sort which normally would not be considered as a cue to intonation-group boundary; an observation of whether such a subject was treated differently at line-end would be extremely interesting. It seems probable, for example, that in lines such as these, by Robert Duncan:

> Bereft, the mothering sky
> searches our faces, searches our heart

the linebreak may encourage readers to place a boundary after the subject, even though it is relatively short and is not likely to be interpreted as topicalised; Duncan himself does place a boundary after *the mothering sky*.[91] A contrary example is provided by May Swenson's lines

> Glossy rapids are
> their teeth and eyes[92]

Here, the noun-phrase subject, *Glossy rapids*, is of a similar length to that in Duncan's poem, but does not end with the line; the reader may be thought less likely, in consequence, to assign it a separate intonation group.[93] These are isolated examples, and intended only to be illustrative; this kind of variable could usefully be explored by a new study.

---

[91]Robert Duncan, 'Bring It Up from the Dark', *Ground Work: Before the War* (New York: New Directions, 1984); Robert Duncan, Introduced by John Ashbery, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum 4/15/69. Cassette. Academy of American Poets, n.cat., n.d.
[92]May Swenson, 'Naked in Borneo', *New and Selected Things Taking Place* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), p. 136.
[93]This is Swenson's own reading (The Poetry and Voice of May Swenson. Cassette. Caedmon CDL5 1500. 1976). Neither does Swenson's performance make audible the linebreak after *are*, thus illustrating Byers's central point.

A final consideration is that, in a poetic context, aesthetic considerations may play an important role. A poetic context can encourage the reader to attend to developing phonetic patterns, and where a pause or boundary cued by linebreak can help to reinforce such a pattern, this may well influence the speaker. Byers herself finds, for example, that, in readings of Marianne Moore's poetry, one of the few non-syntactic cues to boundary is end-rhyme.[94] In other poets, considerations of rhythm, of alliteration, or some other device of aural form may apply. In the poem and performance by May Swenson quoted above, for example, it is likely that internal rhyme and the approximation to metre combine to cue a boundary between l. 1 and l. 2:

> / they wear **AI**r /
> or w**a**ter l**i**ke a sk**I**n /

Lineated differently, it seems unlikely that such a parallelism would be noticed, and built into performance via the boundary and pause after *air* which Swenson observes.

In conclusion, it may be said that studies such as those described in this section are helpful in describing readers' general tendencies. It will be assumed in subsequent chapters of this thesis that readers will not view linebreak as a cue to intonation-group boundary and pause unless other cues can be shown to encourage such a response. Since those cues can involve aesthetic and contextual considerations, a close engagement with both texts and audiences remains necessary.

---

[94]Byers, 'The Auditory Reality of the Verse Line', p. 32.

D) KEY AND PARATONE

The definition of key given in section 1 is as sufficient for its prediction as possible: high key for unexpected material, low for parenthesis and otherwise subordinate material. Paratone is a more difficult question, and is little studied, in any context. Within intonation studies, close attention has only really been paid to the language of news broadcasting, which signals discourse structure particularly clearly. It is unclear whether the inferences drawn from such a study may usefully be applied elsewhere.

Two studies discuss paratone in poetry, although neither uses the term. In his 1975 study of poetic intonation, David Crystal notes that, in lines which include more than one intonation-group, the readers tended to impose prosodic coherence by using a line-long pitch declination. Moreover, he found that this coherence extended over larger units, such as the couplet or verse, and certain features recurred in certain positions - such as the lower pitch height of the final lines in the quatrains of Gray's *Elegy*.[95] This suggests the presence of declination, an essential component of paratone. A more detailed account was published five years later; as with many of the other studies of poetic intonation, its author was Prudence Byers.[96] Byers investigated what she calls the 'phonic sentence', which she describes in terms similar to the definition of the minor paratone adopted here. She finds it to be present in readings of a variety of poets' work, including that of Stevens and Auden, and to vary interestingly between poems. Her terms of analysis are not directly comparable to those used in more recent discussions of paratone, and adopted in this thesis. Nevertheless, her work demonstrates that paratone can be functional in a poetic context.

---

[95]Crystal, 'Intonation and Metrical Theory', p. 121.
[96]Prudence Byers, 'Intonation Prediction and the Sound of Poetry', *Language and Style*, 13 (1980), 3-14.

Given the relative lack of research into paratone, the predictive mechanisms proposed here will be purely retrospective. Once the reader has constructed a performance, the onsets can be listened to, and any patterning of key that seems to indicate paratone can be noted. If the use of key conforms with the principles laid out in section 1 - high key for major new material; low key for hypotaxis; mid key for other - and if the resulting paratones make sense within the discourse structure of the performance, then they can perhaps be considered to be present and functional.

However, if paratoning is to make a substantial contribution to poetic form, it must presumably be demonstrated that it does more than simply reflect discourse structure. If it can be shown to be patterned in such a way as to stimulate aesthetic response, or if it can be shown that a text is able to cue paratone by means unique to the poem, then an attention to paratone may be judged to be a useful critical tool.

3 PRAGMATIC INFLUENCES

This section is shorter than its counterpart in Chapter 3, since considerations of, for example, the influence of activity type (poetry-reading) on tone choice have already been discussed. The obstacles which Chapter 3 noted, notably the lack of available research into changing performance styles, are as problematic for intonation as for rhythm. However, some comments on dialect and intonational change may be made.

There has been little research in comparative intonation within languages; major studies of dialect, such as Wells's *Accents of English*, have tended to say little on the subject. However, recent developments in prosodic labelling suggest that this will soon change. In the United States,

the ToBI model is explicitly designed to be used for comparative purposes, though as yet no published study provides material suitable for the needs of criticism. In the United Kingdom, Esther Grabe and Francis Nolan, of the University of Cambridge's Department of Linguistics, have developed an alternative labelling system, known as IViE (Intonational Variation in English; pronounced 'Ivy') upon which the first detailed study of intonational variation in the British Isles is to be based.[97] No simple conclusions of the sort that might be useful to criticism seem likely to emerge from these projects very soon, but they do hold out hope that a critic who is struggling with a poem in a dialect that is not his or her own may one day have certain resources on which to draw.

Some dialectal differences are already widely recognised. It is well known, for example, that in some dialects, rises are frequently used in declaratives.[98] Within Great Britain, the use of the rise in this way is now identified with the dialect known as Urban North British, although it may be distributed more widely. It is also known that there are significant differences between R.P. and General American, with the latter dialect, for example, avoiding low-rises almost entirely.[99] It may be the case that such obstacles are less problematic than they appear; that the characteristics described above - the prevalence of level tone in poetry, the use of rise and fall to signal discourse structure, and the combination of these tones in tonal sequences - are widely present. Nonetheless, this remains to be demonstrated, and it would be a mistake to construct a general model on the basis of one dialect or group of dialects alone.

---

[97]It is due to be completed in March 2002. Details are at:
<http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/ling/ivyweb/guide.html>

[98]Alan Cruttenden, 'Rises in English', in Windsor Lewis, pp. 155-73. In Basil Bunting's recorded readings, tonal sequences are frequently constructed around rising tones.

[99]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, pp. 94, 97.

Part Three:
Readings

Chapter 5
William Carlos Williams's *The Tempers*: The Limits of Metre

In this and the next two chapters, the approach to nonmetrical verse sound suggested in previous parts of the thesis is applied to three collections of poetry. In this chapter, William Carlos Williams's *The Tempers* (1913) is considered, with a particular concentration on those poems which have an ambiguous relationship with metre. Chapter 6 discusses a much more recent volume, Allen Ginsberg's *Cosmopolitan Greetings* (1994), and seeks to describe the features and functions of Ginsberg's distinctive style. Finally, Chapter 7 considers Jack Kerouac's *Mexico City Blues* (1959), and attempts to discover whether intonation may play an important formal role in some poems. In each case, the chapters seek an understanding both of the individual collections discussed, and of their possible implications for nonmetrical prosody.

1 *THE TEMPERS*: A TRANSITIONAL VOLUME

The Tempers was William Carlos Williams's second collection of poems, appearing four years after the privately printed *Poems* (1909).[1] For many commentators - beginning with the volume's only reviewer, Williams's friend Ezra Pound - the work's value lies in the evidence which it offers of progress towards later work. The derivative forms and diction of *Poems* are partially abandoned, and Williams's distinctive style, which would be

---

[1]William Carlos Williams, *The Tempers* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1913).

more fully explored in *Al Que Quiere!* (1917), begins to emerge.[2] The poet himself referred to the period of *The Tempers* as one of 'finding a poetry of my own'.[3]

The exploratory nature of *The Tempers* is reflected in its use of form. The poems vary widely. Many use rhyme; some experiment with indentation; and there is a great variety of metres and rhythms used. Furthermore, while some poems have an unambiguous relationship to metre - for example, 'The Death of Franco of Cologne', written in heroic couplets - there is a group of predominantly unrhymed texts whose status is much less clear. The reader of these poems, which include 'Postlude', 'An After Song' and 'Contemporania', is frequently left uncertain as to the best way to perform them. These poems raise many questions; from the point of view of literary history, it can be asked whether the passages which provoke such doubts represent unusually loose realisations of metre, or Williams's first experiments with nonmetricality, while from the perspective of prosody, the question raised is that of the best way to discuss such passages.

These poems are the subject of this chapter, which falls into two sections. In the first, a single poem, 'Postlude', is discussed. The poem has been described by one critic as an example of Williams's earliest free verse; in a long analysis, the model of metre set out in Derek Attridge's *The Rhythms of English Poetry*, and adopted in this thesis, is applied to the poem, and an alternative reading put forward. The two readings are then compared, and the terms of that comparison are considered in the light of the difficulties of category definition considered in the Introduction. In a

---

[2]Ezra Pound, '*The Tempers*', *New Freewoman*, 1 (1913), 227. See also Rod Townley, *The Early Poetry of William Carlos Williams* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), pp. 64, 66; Paul Mariani, *William Carlos Williams: A New World Naked* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), p. 109.

[3]William Carlos Williams, *I Wanted to Write a Poem: The Autobiography of the Works of a Poet*, reported and ed. by Edith Hill (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 18.

second section, further poems from *The Tempers* are discussed. An attempt is made to describe some of the techniques of metre and rhythm which they use, and to account for those cases which seem to lend themselves most freely to a nonmetrical performance. Such cases may help to explain the further steps towards nonmetre which Williams would take in later work, and contribute to an assessment of the importance of *The Tempers* , in this respect, to the processes of transition through which his poetry passed.

2 'POSTLUDE': FREE VERSE?

Of all the poems in *The Tempers*, 'Postlude' has attracted the most comment. Submitted by Ezra Pound to Harriet Monroe in the winter of 1912-13, it was among the first batch of Williams's poems to receive US magazine publication, in the June 1913 issue of *Poetry*.[4] Williams's poetic contemporaries were enthusiastic; for Pound, it was 'splendid', and for H.D., 'a Nike, supreme among your poems'.[5] Yet 'Postlude' is a confusing poem, both in content - Williams admitted in a letter to Monroe that 'it is perhaps hyper-digested to the point of unintelligibility' - and in form.[6]

The poem was described as an example of 'Williams's earliest free verse' by Marjorie Perloff, in a study of the poet's career already cited.[7] Such a description may obscure some of the poem's formal and rhythmic difficulties, referred to by Williams as its 'bumps and bruises'.[8] In this discussion, another way of reading 'Postlude' is put forward. As the poem

---

[4]*Poetry*, 2 (1913), 95.
[5]Pound, '*The Tempers*', p. 227; H.D., letter of 14 August 1916, repr. in William Carlos Williams, *Kora in Hell: Improvisations*, in *Imaginations*, ed. by Webster Schott (New York: New Directions, 1970), pp. 6-82 (p. 13) (first publ. Boston: Four Seas, 1920).
[6]Letter of 5 March 1913, in William Carlos Williams, *Selected Letters*, ed. by John C. Thirlwall (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1957), p. 24.
[7]Perloff, '"To Give A Design"', p. 165.
[8]Williams, *Selected Letters*, p. 25.

will be scanned in some detail in the course of this chapter; it is given here in its published, unannotated form:

POSTLUDE

Now that I have cooled to you
Let there be gold of tarnished masonry,
Temples soothed by the sun to ruin
That sleep utterly.
Give me hand for the dances,
Ripples at Philae, in and out,
And lips, my Lesbian,
Wall flowers that once were flame.

Your hair is my Carthage
And my arms the bow,
And our words arrows
To shoot the stars
Who from that misty sea
Swarm to destroy us.

But you there beside me–
Oh how shall I defy you,
Who wound me in the night
With breasts shining
Like Venus and like Mars?
The night that is shouting Jason
When the loud eaves rattle
As with waves above me
Blue at the prow of my desire.

O, prayers in the dark!
O, incense to Poseidon!
Calm in Atlantis.[9]

A) 'PHRASAL RHYTHMS'

In associating 'Postlude' with Williams's early free verse, Marjorie Perloff describes that verse as being 'distinguished by its slow phrasal rhythm, its end-stopping and frequent mid-line pauses'.[10] She does not give a scansion

---

[9]Williams, *Collected Poems*, I, 3-4. The final three lines were omitted from both *Poetry* and *The Tempers*, but were restored in Williams's *The Complete Collected Poems* (1938) and subsequent editions.
[10]Perloff, '"To Give A Design"', p. 165.

of the whole poem, but restricts herself to ll. 1-8, adopting, as is usual in her work, the Trager-Smith system:

> Nów that Î have cóoled to yóu
> Lét there be góld of tárnished másonrỳ,
> Témples sóothed by the sún to rúin
> That sléep útterlỳ.
> Gíve me hánd for the dánces,
> Rípples at Phílae, ín and oút,
> And líps, // mŷ Lésbiàn,
> Wáll flôwers / that ónce were fláme.[11]

The lines show no regularity of syllable count - respectively 7, 10, 9, 5, 7, 8, 6, 7. As for prominences, and accepting for the purposes of discussion the Trager-Smith system, the count depends on the degree of stress which Perloff would consider metrically significant; including only primary stresses, the lines have 3, 4, 4, 2, 3, 4, 2, 3; including primary and secondary stresses, the figures are 4, 4, 4, 2, 3, 4, 3, 4; including all but weak, the lines have 4, 5, 4, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4. The 4-prominence line is, by any count, the most frequent in Perloff's performance. However, it is evidently not felt by her to represent a metrical benchmark. The extent to which the pauses which Perloff notates are disruptive of rhythm is unclear, but their concentration in ll. 7-8 is a further indicator of irregularity and unpredictability. Perloff's reference to 'phrasal rhythm' makes it clear that, although she does perceive rhythm in this stanza, it does not coalesce into a recognisable metre.

Such an analysis leads naturally into a description of 'Postlude' as free verse.[12] However, the foundations of this analysis may be challenged. The Trager-Smith scansion was argued against in Chapter 1. The problems

---

[11]*Ibid.* ´ = primary stress, ^ = secondary, ` = tertiary, while weak stress is left unmarked. // = strong pause; / = lesser pause (p. 162).

[12]I am assuming that Perloff's use of the term *free verse* is broadly equivalent to *nonmetrical poetry*. She has recently rejected the latter term, although finding that it is used 'sensibly' within Attridge's *Poetic Rhythm* ('After Free Verse', p. 88). Her preferred definition of free verse is that of Charles Hartman, cited in the Introduction, above.

which it entails for notating a poem such as 'Postlude' is that it represents linguistic, rather than perceptual patterning, and fails to specify the conditions under which listeners induce a metre from these patterns of language. In consequence, it can not easily be used for distinguishing metre from nonmetre. In contrast, the beat-based notation of *REP* facilitates metre recognition, by showing how, where lines have different 'stress counts', a common rhythmic structure can nonetheless be perceived.

If applied to 'Postlude', this notation describes a complex and interesting structure. However, it is important to note that, while such a scansion may demonstrate the advantages of a beat-based, rather than language-based account of metre, it does not invalidate Perloff's conception of this poem as free verse. The persuasiveness of the beat-based notation brings its own risks; it would be a mistake to imagine that because a certain pattern can be demonstrated, no other conception of the poem is permissible. The two readings may simply be based on a different set of performance decisions, themselves deriving from ambiguities in the poem.

B) A BEAT-BASED READING

The following account of 'Postlude' uses the notations and methods described in Chapter 3. In scansion, the marks printed below each line denote the beats and offbeats which make up the metre; where the phonetic realisation of individual syllables is discussed, it is conveyed through the use of bold type, upper-case letters and underlines. The distribution of prominences and of beats are in the first instance determined by intuition, but are checked against the linguistic tendencies, and the metrical rules, discussed in Chapter 3.

The poem's opening lines are in many ways the most difficult. Perloff's description of them as free verse is attractive, yet, as stated above, there appear to be significant regularities even in such a reading. It is difficult to convert Trager-Smith notation into the phonetics- and performance-based approach of this thesis, but the following may be a fair approximation of Perloff's performance; it assumes that stresses of degrees 1 and 2 will be uttered as pitch accents, with the nucleus determined according to position, while degree 3 will correspond to a non-pitch prominence:

/ n**O**w / that **i** have c**oo**led to y**OU** /
let there be g**O**ld/ of t**a**rnished m**A**sonry, /
t**E**mples / s**oo**thed by the s**un** to r**UI**n /
that sl**ee**p **U**tterly. /

The regularity of the patterns suggested by Perloff's scansion are clearly visible in such a scansion; with four pitch accents in each of ll. 1-3, and two in l. 4, there is a strong encouragement to perform the lines as a 4x4 stanza - that is, four lines of four beats each - with a final line shortened to two beats. To resist such a performance requires, at least for ll. 1-3, careful prominence placement; the breaking of l. 1 into two intonation groups, with the nuclei falling elsewhere than on the metrically important third accent in the line, is one way to achieve this. Line 4, in any reading, is an obstacle to a metrical interpretation. It has only two prominences; to pause between them, allowing the metre to be perceived, may seem much less satisfying than to give the line a rapid, undramatic reading, slightly disabused in tone; the appeal of such a delivery may, in turn, make all four lines seem better delivered as a meditation of varying tempo, rather than as a beat-based verse stanza. This kind of performance decision cannot be taken in isolation. Whatever reading is decided upon will have to be reconciled with the remainder of the poem, and with processes of re-reading and

rehearsal. Lines 1-4 will therefore be returned to at the end of this discussion, when the likely forms of subsequent lines and stanzas has been established.

The second half of st. 1 is rhythmically more straightforward:

Give me hand for the dances,
B o B ŏ B o [B]
Ripples at Philae, in and out,
B ŏ B o B o B
And lips, my Lesbian,
o B [oB] o B ŏ [B]
Wall flowers that once were flame.
B ŏ B o B [oB]

The dance theme and clear falling rhythm of l. 5, with three accentable items spaced relatively regularly, and the symmetrical structure of l. 6, with alliterated accentable syllables either side of the comma, create a perception of underlying 4x4 rhythm that is strong enough not to be blocked by the unusual mid-line unrealised beat in l. 7, and the doubt as to accent placement in l. 8 (*Wall flowers* or *wall flowers*?)

The second stanza also has a strong underlying rhythm, although describing its metre may be more difficult. Its phonetic realisation, in terms of the distribution of accents, seems relatively clear. Every line has two main accentable items; each of these may be accorded its own intonation group, or the pairs may be combined as onset and nucleus:

/ your h**AI**r / is my c**A**rthage /
and my **A**rms / the b**O**w,
and our w**O**rds / **A**rrows
to sh**OO**t / the st**A**rs /
who from that m**I**sty / s**EA** /
sw**A**rm / to destr**O**y us. /

/ your h**ai**r is my c**A**rthage /
and my **a**rms the b**O**w, /
and our w**o**rds **A**rrows /
to sh**oo**t the st**A**rs /
who from that m**i**sty s**EA** /
sw**a**rm to destr**O**y us. /

That every line contains two accents naturally suggests their combination in a metrical structure:

Your hair is my Carthage
o B ŏ B o
And my arms the bow,
ŏ B o B
And our words arrows
ŏ B ôB o
To shoot the stars
o B o B
Who from that misty sea
ŏ B o B
Swarm to destroy us.
ô B ŏ B o

This kind of two-beat line is slightly difficult to accommodate with the *REP* model of metre, in which two-beat lines are presented either as interpolations within a 4x4 structure, or as concealments of such a structure.[13] For example, a stanza from Byron's 'Stanzas: "Could love for ever..."':

Could love for ever
Run like a river,
And Time's endeavour
Be tried in vain –
No other pleasure
With this could measure;
And like a treasure
We'd hug the chain.

is relineated and explained by Attridge as follows:

Could love for ever run like a river,
B B B B
And Time's endeavour be tried in vain –
B B B B
No other pleasure with this could measure;
B B B B
And like a treasure we'd hug the chain.
B B B B

While altering the distinctive rhythmic flavour imparted by the metrical pattern, this rearrangement reveals clearly the underlying 4x4 structure, and helps explain

[13] *REP*, pp. 85-86, p. 104, p. 127, p. 200, p. 202, p. 303, p. 333, pp. 335-37.

why the rhyme word 'chain' is reached with such a feeling of resolution: it is, in fact, the crucial closing rhyme of the familiar *abcb* scheme.[14]

Such an approach is unsuited to the stanza from 'Postlude'. If Williams's three two-beat lines are considered in pairs, no 4x4 stanza results; rather, a 3x4, or a 4x4 from which the last line is missing. Moreover, there is a great irregularity in offbeat distribution, particularly at line end. The equivalent of a triple offbeat separates the final beat of the stanza's first line, and the first beat of its second - 'Carthage / And my arms', while there is only an implied offbeat in the same position between its fifth and sixth - 'sea / Swarm'. These irregularities create a resistance to easy transition within the putative line pairs; also influential are the other metrical complexities sprinkled throughout the stanza - the implied offbeat in l. 11, the triple offbeat that begins l. 13 - and the stanza's lack of rhyme, which gives it a relatively weak sense of forward movement. Considerable effort is needed to maintain each printed line's sense of rhythmic form, and a pronounced sense of pause is, in consequence, likely to mark each linebreak.[15]

Given these considerations, it is probably preferable to consider the metre of these lines as a genuine two-beat, rather than a concealment of a four-beat pattern. It recalls the short, rhymed, two-beat lines of John Skelton, and the hemistichs of Old and Middle English verse.[16] Although this pattern does not accord with the way in which *REP* deals with two-beat lines, it can be described following the *REP* approach. The metrical

---

[14]*REP*, pp. 85-86.

[15]In consequence, the reader has a certain freedom - ll. 13-14, for example, may be read as a pentameter:

/ who from that misty sEA / swArm to destroy us.
B B B B B

[16]Tennyson's 'Battle of Brunanburh' (1880), a translation of a tenth-century poem, lineates each two-beat hemistich separately; the resulting pattern is in some ways comparable to that described here. *Tennyson: A Selected Edition*, ed. by Christopher Ricks (London: Longman, 1989), pp. 621-25.

notation *2.2.2 [...]* is proposed, indicating that the pattern creates the expectation that each line will contain two beats, but that no culmination point or grouping of the lines is prescribed or anticipated.

The long third stanza is metrically quite complex. It begins with a line that seems to continue the 2.2.2. [...] metre of st. 2, yet ends with lines that are closer to the four-beat rhythms of ll. 5-8. There is certainly a change in rhythm in the course of this stanza, yet there is also a cohesion, which relies on the close relationship between two-beat and four-beat rhythms. This is a difficult combination to describe, but one that suggests the achievement of a skilful transition. Every line but the last is open, in my reading, to more than one performance, depending on whether its metre is heard as two-beat or four-beat. I have therefore notated these alternatives below each line, with the reading which seems preferable given first; that of the stanza's first five lines is as two-beat, while that of the remaining lines is as the three-beat realisation of a four-beat underlying rhythm:

But you there beside me–
o B ŏ B o
o B ô B o B o [B]
Oh how shall I defy you,
o B ŏ B o
o B o B o B o [B]
Who wound me in the night
o B ŏ B
o B o B̄ o B [oB]
With breasts shining
o B ô B o
o B [oBo] B o [B]
Like Venus and like Mars?
o B ŏ B
o B o B̄ o B [oB]
The night that is shouting Jason
o B ŏ B o B o [B]
o B ŏ B o
When the loud eaves rattle
ŏ B ôB ôB o [B]
ŏ B ȯ B o
As with waves above me
B o B o B o [B]
ŏ B o B o
Blue at the prow of my desire.
B ŏ B ŏ B [oB]

Although continuing the 2.2.2. [...] metre of st. 2, the stanza's first five lines anticipate subsequent changes. In st. 2, the number of unaccented syllables between each line's two beats had not exceeded two; l. 15, the first of this stanza, has a similar structure. In ll. 16-19, however, the number of unaccented syllables between beats generally increases: there are, respectively, 3, 3, 0 and 3. This has consequences for the reader's likely approach to its rhythm, since, while a triple offbeat is perfectly possible, it can be difficult to perform and to perceive a sequence of three unaccented syllables without the central such syllable acquiring its own status within the rhythm, as a subsidiary beat.[17] This is the suggestion of the alternative scansion proposed for each of ll. 15-19, in which such central syllables are considered to have been promoted, realising a beat:

/ like venus and like mArs? /
o B o $\bar{B}$ o B [oB]

This central beat would be likely to be perceptually weaker than the major 1st and 3rd beats of the line, and another scansion might show the line as dipodic. The four-beat reading is thus an available alternative to the two-beat in l. 15-19; if it feels less convincing, this can principally be ascribed to l. 15's close association with the two-beat of the preceding stanza, and to the fact that ll. 16-19 continue the sentence which l. 15 begins.[18]

The preferences reverse at l. 20, for three reasons. Firstly, the line begins a new sentence. Secondly, the interval between the two main beats is expanded to four syllables; it is very difficult to perform a quadruple offbeat satisfactorily. Thirdly, these syllables in part comprise an item of much higher accentual status than has been the case hitherto - the verb

---

[17]*REP*, pp. 164-8. The extra beat is presented by Attridge as 'blurred' over the three unstressed syllables, rather than associated specifically with the central one (p. 166).
[18]It may be worth considering these lines dipodic - that is, with the second and fourth beats perceptually weaker than the first and third.

element *shouting* - whose first syllable is very likely to be accented, making promotion unnecessary. Such an accent could, of course, be demoted to function as an offbeat, but a demotion in favour of a quadruple offbeat seems very improbable. The line marks the point at which the two-beat metre is expanded from within into a three-beat realisation of a four-beat underlying rhythm, effectively doubling the metrical base and making explicit the alternative which in previous lines had been available, but submerged:

The night that is shouting Jason
o B ŏ B o B o [B]

The preference for this pattern is reinforced by ll. 21-22, both of which place an item of high accentual status between the major beats - *eaves*, *waves*. Line 23, which marks the climax of this stanza, and whose tempo is likely to be slowed by this status, as well as by its three likely pitch accents, is rhythmically unambiguous, and completes the stanza's transition from two-beat to four-beat:

Blue at the prow of my desire.
B ŏ B ŏ B [oB]

Following this climax, the poem's final stanza retreats to a two-accent, two-beat metre:

O, prayers in the dark!
o B ŏ B
O, incense to Poseidon!
o B ŏ B o
Calm in Atlantis.
B ŏ B o

The 'calm' of the final line is assisted by the move from a triple to a double offbeat - a considerable reduction in metrical complexity.

At this point in the discussion, l. 1-4 can be reconsidered. With the two-beat and four-beat patterns established as recurrent within this

performance of 'Postlude', any rehearsed reading of the poem's opening lines is likely to reflect their influence. The most likely beat-based reading of this stanza is probably as follows:

Now that I have cooled to you
B o B o B o B
Let there be gold of tarnished masonry,
ôB ŏ B o B o B ŏ
Temples soothed by the sun to ruin
B o B ŏ B o Bo
That sleep utterly.
o B [oBo] B ŏ [B]

The notation makes clear the problem with l. 4 evoked above: the need for an [oBo] sequence in mid-line. Mid-line unrealised beats are not included in the *REP* model, and that in l. 4 seems unsatisfactory - especially given the relative weakness of *utterly*, which seems anticlimactic after such an unusual rhythmic device. An alternative metrical reading would be as a simple two-beat, similar to the lines interspersed among the four-beats in the Burns stanza:

That sleep utterly.
o B ôB ŏ

This would have the advantage of resembling a known pattern, and would more easily permit the disabused tone which was suggested as perhaps appropriate. On the other hand, this pattern is present nowhere else in the poem, whereas the example of l. 7:

And lips, my Lesbian,
o B [oB] o B ŏ [B]

does encourage the use of the pause and implied beat. The [oBo] sequence is therefore preferable, but does not represent a wholly satisfactory rendition of this line.

C) METRICAL OR NONMETRICAL?

The form of 'Postlude', as performed above, is strongly rhythmic, yet is probably unique. The simplest accurate description of the poem would have to be as a series of variations on 4-beat and 2-beat rhythms, with no fixed stanza form, and with great variety in the distribution and nature of offbeats, an unusually high proportion of which are triple. A more detailed account would need to proceed stanza by stanza. The first, for example, could be described as an eight-line stanza of underlying rhythm 4B, whose metrical pattern is ((o))B‹oB›oBo‹B›‹o›, and whose realised stanza form is 4.4.4.2.3.4.2.3; each of the remaining stanzas would need a different description.

On the basis of the definitions adopted in the Introduction, 'Postlude', as performed here, is metrical, despite the complexity and novelty of its patterns, since beats are felt throughout. However, the poem raises one of the difficulties of category definition raised in the Introduction: that of the multiple relationships that may exist between text and performance. If the refinements suggested in the Introduction are to be sought, such that the working definition of nonmetrical poetry may be improved, 'Postlude' is a good place to start, since the difficulties which it raises are challenging, but not overwhelming.

i) The choice between readings

In comparing metrical and free-verse performances, their relative performative difficulty may be an important consideration. As noted in Chapter 3, the realisation rules proposed in *REP* are a useful statement of the habitual tolerances of the metrical tradition, and a point of comparison for performance.

Individual lines of 'Postlude' are surprisingly easy to reconcile with the *REP* rules, provided that certain conditions apply. Most notably, the offbeat rule must allow for triple offbeats, which are frequent in 'Postlude', and the constraints associated with accentual-syllabic verse cannot be applied.[19] Indeed, there are only two points at which the poem appears to behave in a way which lies wholly outside the *REP* framework: the mid-line pauses in ll. 4 and 7:

That sleep utterly.
o B [oBo] B ŏ [B]
[...]
And lips, my Lesbian,
o B [oB] o B ŏ [B]

According to *REP*, only the fourth beat in a four-beat rhythm may be unrealised; in *Poetic Rhythm*, this condition is not present, but only in a single text is an unrealised beat in any position but the fourth noted, and that is a recorded rap whose particular realisation, as Attridge says, is only discernible from the text by those already familiar with the recording.[20] These mid-line unrealised beats therefore lie outside the *REP* model. The implied offbeats are also problematic; *REP*'s rules state that they may only be found 'between two stressed syllables', and although some of *REP*'s own examples contradict this, with cases of [oB] cited at line end, there is no example of either [Bo] or [oBo].[21] Nevertheless, the non-prediction by rule of these rhythmic phenomena does not make them impossible for either readers or poets within the freer metrical styles. I have been unable to find another poem containing exactly the sequence [oBo], but the mid-line unrealised beat is not unprecedented:

---

[19]*REP*, pp. 175-86.
[20]*Poetic Rhythm*, pp. 93-94. The rap is Tone Loc's 'Wild Thing', which includes two first-position unrealised beats.
[21]*Poetic Rhythm*'s introduction of a distinction between *implied offbeats* - a pause induced by linguistic rhythm - and *virtual offbeat* - that which separates successive stressed beats - complicates discussion in this area.

Tell me where is fancy bred?
B o B o B o B
Or in the heart or in the head?
B ŏ B ôB ŏ B
How begot, how nourished?
B o B o B o B
Reply, reply.
o B [oB] o B [oB][22]

Furthermore, the fact that in 'Postlude' the mid-line unrealised beat occurs twice in quick succession, and in the second instance is forced by punctuation, reduces its awkwardness for the reader. The metre of individual lines of 'Postlude' is thus not impossibly challenging to the reader, although the effect of the frequent and triple and implied offbeats should not be underestimated. Instead, it is the successful combination of these lines, within a poem which lacks recognisable stanza forms and whose metrical pattern varies frequently, that constitutes the greater difficulty.

The same is probably true of a nonmetrical reading, although, since Perloff scans only ll. 1-8, it is difficult to tell exactly how she reconciles her description of the poem as free verse with the more insistent rhythms of subsequent stanzas. It is certain that these opening lines, whose metrical complexities are significant, are the easiest to perform nonmetrically. If the poem as whole is to be performed nonmetrically, then the metre which I have suggested is present will have to be concealed, through adroit timing of prominences. Alternatively, the existence of a single nonmetrical stanza might be considered sufficient for the poem as a whole to be considered nonmetrical; this is, indeed, the implication of the definitions adopted in

---

[22]*The Merchant of Venice*, III. 2. 63. Other examples include the opening stanzas of Ezra Pound's 'Contemporania', discussed below, and of Theodore Roethke's 'The Serpent', (Theodore Roethke, *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 111).

the Introduction. It seems unlikely, however, that Perloff's unequivocal description of the poem as 'free verse' relies on such a distinction.

In assessing the relationship between the two performances and the text of the poem, their reconcilability with *REP*'s realisation rules cannot be a decisive factor; as discussed in Chapter 3, these rules rely in part on the reader's willingness to allow a metrical pattern to emerge, which is precisely the point at issue. Instead, other criteria may be appealed to: those which reflect aesthetic or rhetorical needs, historical circumstance, or critical priorities.

Within aesthetic and rhetorical perspectives, matters of individual taste must affect judgement. The case for a free-verse performance of ll. 1-4 was suggested above, and rests on its appropriateness to the tone of the lines. It has the further advantage of avoiding the potentially rather bathetic effect produced by the metrical reading of l. 4, in which a weak adverb is preceded by the drum-roll of an unrealised beat. Its application throughout the poem would achieve a similarly diffuse effect, and might be considered appropriate to the material of the poem, whose content could be seen as purposefully vague. 'Postlude"s allusions are sometimes baffling - the address to 'my Lesbian', and the statement that 'your hair is my Carthage', for example - and its general mood of lassitude moving through arousal back to lassitude might be thought better served by a reading that eschews the framework of metre. The case for a metrical reading, on the other hand, might point to the pleasure brought by the experience of structured variation, and to the rhetorical effectiveness of the metre at particular moments. For example, a metrical performance of ll. 5-8 reinforces its invitation to dance; the slippery two-beat of the second stanza is appropriate to its combination of defiance and irresolution; the build to a four-beat in l. 23 ('Blue at the prow of my desire'), followed by a retreat into two-beat for the poem's closing lines, is highly expressive of the

poem's cyclical structure, which in ll. 23-24 may be at its point of greatest contrast - poised between an evocation of sexual arousal and that of the annihilation of Atlantis. At all of these points, the metre, if present in performance, will play an important expressive part; other examples could easily be cited.

From the point of view of the historical availability of the two performances, no decisive conclusion can be drawn. To the poem's first readers, both were likely to be available, although with nuances of probability that might have since become obscured. For example, the association of free-verse composition with the use of a classical theme was strong at the time of 'Postlude''s publication; indeed, Imagism was defined as much by its 'Hellenism' as by its formal novelty. By 1913, the pages of *Poetry* had seen several nonmetrical poems on classical subjects, while 'Postlude''s first British printing, in *The New Freewoman* for Sept. 1, 1913, was in the company of H.D.'s 'Sitalkas' and Richard Aldington's 'To Atthis', both free-verse, classically-themed works. These associations, and indeed these juxtapositions, might well have encouraged a nonmetrical response to 'Postlude'. On the other hand, nonmetricality was far from as generalised as it has since become, so that metrical expectations might have characterised a high proportion of 'Postlude''s readers, whatever its theme; readers who came across the poem in *The Tempers* would also have found a high percentage of that collection's poems to be metrical. Present-day readers, however, may be thought likely to read Williams's subsequent career back into his earlier work, and thus have a relatively strong predisposition in favour of nonmetricality.[23]

---

[23]Given its awkwardnesses of form and content, and Williams's lack of renown at the time, 'Postlude''s early readers might have found it metrical, but incompetent. Any such judgement is likely to be closely related to the reader's overall happiness with, and trust in the poem, from every point of view.

My own preferred description of the poem is in terms of the metrical performance, for a variety of reasons, from the ethical - the metrical performance demands a considerable engagement with the poem, including its many awkwardnesses - to the aesthetic. The rapid changes of metre are unusual, and, to my perceptions, pleasurable. However, for many critical purposes, the appeal to such criteria is not wholly satisfactory; if, for example, an assessment is to be made of the status of *The Tempers* as a transitional volume, in which Williams begins to move away from metre. Part of such an assessment is likely to consider, not only the performances to which a poem such as 'Postlude' gives rise, but also the intentions of the poet himself. What was Williams seeking to achieve in this poem?

Here, the balance of evidence is firmly in favour of the metrical performance. Williams's career at this time was marked by attempts to rethink metre, as well as to move beyond it, and the difficulties of 'Postlude' seem to characterise an attempt to push the reader's tolerance of metrical variation and complexity to unusual limits. The form which these experiments took is likely to have been influenced by the considerable influence which popular and Shakespearean song forms exerted on his writing. The poem's frequent variation in offbeats, and even its use of mid-line unrealised beats, can be related to comments made by Williams in an essay of 1913:

> To count the syllables is but the bare makeshift for the appreciation of elapsing time [...] the time, not the syllables, *must* be counted.
>
> But with the aid of Heaven no one shall confuse this conception with the simple stressed line; that is, three stresses, four stresses to a line, etc., this is not rhythm, this is only the half.[24]

---

[24]William Carlos Williams, 'Speech Rhythm', MS first published in Mike Weaver, *William Carlos Williams: The American Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 82-83. Williams submitted this essay to Monroe at about the same time as the group of poems which included 'Postlude'.

These comments have usually been taken as somewhat obscure, and, as a set of general observations on poetic metre, they suggest a reluctance to appreciate both the importance of the syllable to accentual-syllabic metres, and the relative closeness of these metres to everyday speech behaviour. Nonetheless, Williams's insistence on some form of isochrony, and on the fact that stresses are 'only the half' of rhythm, recalls the prosodic theory of Coventry Patmore, and is entirely compatible with a beat-based approach to metre. If 'Postlude' is compared to other poems written in the years 1912-13 - notably 'From "The Birth of Venus": Song' and 'Sicilian Emigrant's Song' - a similar stretching of readers' tolerances in beat assignment can be perceived.[25]

ii) Nonmetre in text and performance

An appeal to biographical evidence is helpful in finally settling on a description of 'Postlude', yet such evidence is not always available, nor always appropriate. Were it lacking, or ignored, it would seem that the only principled description of the poem would be in terms of its potential for divergent performances - metrical and nonmetrical - with grounds for preference between them noted.

Such an approach has considerable implications for the definitions of nonmetricality proposed in the Introduction:

Working definitions:

Nonmetrical language is language in which beats are not experienced.

---

[25]Williams, *Collected Poems*, I, 6, 26. The use of musical titles - including, of course, 'Postlude' - may well have been an attempt to encourage readers towards flexibility in beat assignment.

Nonmetrical poetry is poetry made up, in whole or in part, of nonmetrical language.

The lack of qualification contained in these definitions contrasts with the case of 'Postlude', in which beats *may be* experienced.[26] To maintain the unequivocality of the above definitions in the face of metrically ambiguous poetry will require that metricality be considered a property of performances, rather than texts. This would represent a significant departure from prevailing usage.

Possible solutions to this difficulty are considered in the Conclusion. However, the terms in which the two performances of 'Postlude' were distinguished - largely those of aesthetics and literary history - suggest one possibility: that, if any attempt is made to classify a poem as metrical or nonmetrical, the audience for whom that classification is accurate should be specified. In the case of 'Postlude', for example, it may be said that the poem was metrical for its author, for many of its early readers - some of whom, the *REP* rules suggest, are likely to have found it clumsy - and for some of its later readers; but nonmetrical for early enthusiasts of *vers libre*, and for later readers more familiar with the poet's nonmetrical work, or with a model of metre that obscures rhythms which have an irregular relationship to linguistic form.

3 WAYS TO NONMETRE IN *THE TEMPERS*

All the poems in *The Tempers* have a close relationship with metre. This includes the group of entirely unrhymed poems, excluding 'Postlude', on which this discussion will concentrate: 'An After Song', 'Crude Lament',

---

[26]Moreover, 'Postlude' is not the most challenging case that may be imagined; its most difficult aspects could be accommodated by minor adjustments to the *REP* rules.

'Homage', 'Ad Infinitum', 'Contemporania', and 'To Wish Myself Courage'. In each of these texts, however, the consensus that *The Tempers* is a transitional collection appears justified, as all contain passages in which forms emerge that seem to suggest those of nonmetrical poetry. By examining these forms, and their implications for the broader appreciation of the poems concerned, a better sense may emerge of the nature and conditions of Williams's transition to nonmetrical writing; it may be better understood, in particular, whether the forms that characterise his later work did indeed emerge from the experiments with metre carried out in *The Tempers*, or constituted a total overhaul of Williams's poetic practice. In this discussion, two principal aspects of *The Tempers* will be addressed. The different metres used will be explored, in order to assess whether any is particularly helpful to the emergence of nonmetrical forms; an attempt will be made to identify other techniques - of lineation or diction, for example - which appear to encourage this emergence.

A) FINDING METRE

Leaving aside 'Postlude', the most immediate metrical influence on only one of the unrhymed poems is the 4-beat metre. It is well known that such a metre, which is in English predominantly associated with the ballad and hymn traditions, exerts an extremely powerful influence on readers. Among Williams's experiments with lineation and layout in *The Tempers*, probably the least successful are those which, within the rhymed and part-rhymed poems, seem to have as their principal goal the mitigation of this influence:

> O crimson salamander,
> Because of love's whim sacred!
> Swim
> the winding flame

Predestined to disman him
And bring our fellow home to us again.[27]

This is the first stanza of 'The Ordeal'. Despite the lineation, it would require considerable effort on the part of the reader not to produce the following performance:

O crimson salamander,
B B B [B]
Because of love's whim sacred!
B B B [B]
Swim the winding flame
B B B [B]
Predestined to disman him
B B B B
And bring our fellow home to us a-
B B B B
gain.
B [B] [B] [B]

The same phenomenon occurs in 'Portent', another of the rhymed poems in which an irregular lineation is overwhelmed by a four-beat rhythm. It is unsurprising that the wholly unrhymed group, having already dispensed with one factor conducive to metricality, should, with the exceptions of 'Postlude' and one other poem, also avoid a four-beat underlying rhythm.

That other poem is 'To Wish Myself Courage', which closes the collection. Despite its beginning and ending with a four-beat metre, the poem does contains one stanza which seems genuinely nonmetrical. Although the measures which the poem takes in order to permit this are thus much more successful than those of lineation, the poem still constitutes a considerable challenge for the reader:

TO WISH MYSELF COURAGE

On the day when youth is no more upon me
I will write of the leaves and the moon in a tree top!
I will sing then the song, long in the making–
When the stress of youth is put away from me.

---

[27]*Collected Poems*, I, 8.

How can I ever be written out as men say?
Surely it is merely an interference with the long song–
This that I am now doing.

But when the spring of it is worn like the old moon
And the eaten leaves are lace upon the cold earth–
Then I will rise up in my great desire–
Long at the birth–and sing me the youth-song![28]

The first quatrain has four unambiguous beats, as does the poem's final line; this return to the four-beat seems thematically to signify the triumphant overcoming of doubt, and a rediscovery, in wise middle age, of the vigour of youth. Intervening lines move away from this rhythm, but the four-beat's influence remains strong. For example, ll. 8-9, and perhaps l. 10, would in most contexts be read as pentameters, and may be so here; in a rehearsed reading, however, the four-beat which follows exerts a retrospective pull, and may lead to these lines, too, acquiring a four-beat rhythm.

Despite this pervading influence, the poem's second stanza manages, as I read it, to oblige the reader to perform it nonmetrically. This is achieved by a variety of means:

How can I ever be written out as men say?
Surely it is merely an interference with the long song–
This that I am now doing.

The wide variation in syllable and likely accent distribution within these three lines is naturally unconducive to a beat-based reading; in l. 6, there are simply too many accentable syllables for four to stand out, and in l. 7, too few. However, l. 5, the stanza's key, opening line, makes use of a variety of other resources in blocking the metre: those of diction, intonation, and thematic relevance. There is a faltering of tone, for example; although the line could be read as an expression of defiance, the

---

[28]*Collected Poems*, I, 16-17.

continuation via 'Surely' suggests rather the expression of a need for reassurance, which is not easily reconciled with the regularity and strength of the four-beat. Furthermore, the return in the poem's final line to that metre is likely to be taken as signifying the triumphant overcoming of this need, and, by giving metre a thematic as well as an expressive function, encourages the nonmetrical rendering of this moment of irresolution. From the point of view of intonation, the fact that l. 5 constitutes a question means that at least one of its nuclei is likely to be rising. If this rise is placed on 'written out', as seems likely, it will be spread over the two words, perhaps as a fall-rise tone made up of a fall through 'written' and a rise through 'out'; this 'spreading' does not block any attempt to make of the accent a beat, but will certainly make things more difficult. Similarly, the status of 'written out' as a quotation ('as men say') is likely to be conveyed by the intonational equivalent of gestured quotation marks - the creation of a separate intonation group, probably accompanied by a slight raising of pitch - which will further disrupt any attempt to read the line as a simple progression of beats:

/ how can I Ever be / written OUt / as men sAy?/

Such devices will continue to be of importance to Williams's poetry. However, their effect should be seen against the backdrop of the four-beat; what is achieved is the carving out of a nonmetrical interlude within a nonetheless strongly metrical poem.

In contrast, the poems whose metrical echoes are those of the pentameter involve a much less violent contrast between metrical and nonmetrical passages. The subtlety of the pentameter's perceptual and performative influence is well known, and helps to explain its particular suitability to the evocation of speech rhythms. It also makes it an appropriate metre from which to move into nonmetricality, as exemplified

in the poetry of Eliot. Within *The Tempers*, pentameter has a significant presence, with three poems written entirely or almost entirely in iambic pentameter ('Immortal', 'The Death of Franco of Cologne' and 'Con Brio'). Among the unrhymed poems, the work which best illustrates the ease with which the pentameter allows the reader to move into nonmetricality is 'An After Song':

AN AFTER SONG

So art thou broken in upon me, Apollo,
Through a splendor of purple garments–
Held by the yellow-haired Clymene
To clothe the white of thy shoulders–
Bare from the day's leaping of horses.
This is strange to me, here in the modern twilight.[29]

The poem may be interpreted as the evocation of a sunset, with the Classical personifications suggesting the subsidiary narrative of an afternoon spent in bed: a serenade. Apollo, the poet's protector, can here be identified with Helios the sun-god, conveyed, as the day proceeds, in a horse-drawn chariot from East to West, and married to Clymene; the poem works on one level as the portrait of a yellow-haired goddess holding a purple cloak over a god's bare shoulders, but also, I think, as the fanciful description of the sun's sinking, with the rays yellow at its top, and purple as they are partly refracted by clouds, and the whiteness either that of clouds as yet untouched by the sun's rays, or a landscape or sea below.

From the point of view of performance, choosing a rhythm for these lines is not easy: every line can be read in more than one way. I perform the poem as follows:

/ so art thou broken in upon me, apOllo,
B B B B B
/ through a splEndor / of purple gArments–
B B B B

---

[29]*Collected Poems*, I, 7.

/ hEld / by the yellow-haired clymEne
/ to clOthe / the white of thy shOUlders–
/ bare from the dAy's / leaping of hOrses.
B B B B
/ this is strAnge to me, / here in the modern twIlight. /
B B B B B

The poem both begins and ends as iambic pentameter; its intervening lines cannot be read as pentameter, lacking five accentable or promotable syllables. However, this does not create any rhythmic awkwardness. Despite their framing by a pair of pentameters, the reader of ll. 2-5 is free to allow accents to create local patterns, which may or may not resemble those of preceding lines, and is under no pressure to time and group them in such a way that beats will emerge. In the above performance, ll. 2 and 5 emerge as four-beat, but in another reading might not. This relaxed engagement with metre suits the poem very well, both in its aptness to the serenade theme, and expressively, as the emphasis brought by the final line's return to the pentameter contributes much to its epigrammatic tone.[30]

Among the group of unrhymed poems in *The Tempers*, the rhythm that is most used is neither four-beat nor pentameter. Instead, Williams's lines are more often close to the two-beat form identified in 'Postlude''s second stanza. That stanza is suggestive of the form's advantages for the poet in search of a route into nonmetricality - most notably, its capacity to accommodate a wide variation in offbeats. However, the metre has other advantages in this respect. One, obscured by 'Postlude''s rather stilted diction, is its closeness to the typical intonational patterns of everyday speech, in which intonation groups containing two accents are extremely frequent. The effect of this can be seen in another of the metrical poems in *The Tempers*, 'Ad Infinitum':

---

[30]The reverse indentation of this final line seems to derive from Keats's 'The Eve of St Agnes', and thus ultimately from the Spenserian stanza.

AD INFINITUM

Still I bring flowers
B B
Although you fling them at my feet
B B
Until none stays
B B
That is not struck across with wounds
B B
Flowers and flowers
B B
That you may break them utterly
B B
As you have always done.[31]
B B

The longer lines in this, the poem's first stanza, could be read as four-beat patterns, but the intonational naturalness of the two-beat form, and its flexibility in offbeat distribution, means that the two-beat can be maintained throughout with no loss of clarity, and considerable formal gains. Read in such a way, each line of this poem falls naturally into a single intonation group, and is easily heard as moving from onset to nucleus, or from nucleus to post-nuclear prominence:

/still i bring fLOwers/
until you flING them at my feet/

Unlike many of the poems in *The Tempers*, 'Ad Infinitum' succeeds in creating a strong and attractive metrical structure in which speech rhythms are not overly distorted.

'Ad Infinitum', like 'Postlude', remains metrical. Neither poem is thus capable of demonstrating the aspect of the two-beat rhythm which is perhaps most contributory to its suitability to poetry seeking to move into nonmetricality: the ease with which the performer may relinquish it when it is no longer required. This ease follows logically from the description of the two-beat given in the preceding paragraph: variety in offbeats, and a

---

[31](Adapted from) Williams, *Collected Poems*, I, 11.

natural intonation, mean that the moment at which metricality is left behind is unlikely to feel awkward to either reader or listener.

One of the poems that illustrates this is 'Crude Lament', a poem which dramatises the frustration felt by a member of a hunting community - probably a boy in early adolescence - at his inability to share in adult, male society:

CRUDE LAMENT

Mother of flames,
The men that went ahunting
Are asleep in the snow drifts.
You have kept the fire burning!
Crooked fingers that pull
Fuel from among the wet leaves,
Mother of flames
You have kept the fire burning!
The young wives have fallen asleep
With wet hair, weeping,
Mother of flames!
The young men raised the heavy spears
And are gone prowling in the darkness.
O mother of flames,
You who have kept the fire burning!
Lo, I am helpless!
Would God they had taken me with them![32]

The principal formal device of this poem seems to be its expressive use of rhythm to convey the contrast between dependency and full adulthood, as it alternates between the two-beat, nursery-rhyme metre of the refrain, predominantly triple:

Mother of flames
B ŏ B
You have kept the fire burning!
ŏ B ŏ B o

and the freer forms of interspersed, apparently nonmetrical longer lines, which describe activities and concerns in which the protagonist is unable to participate:

---

[32]Williams, *Collected Poems*, I, 7-8.

/ crooked fIngers / that pull
fUEl / from among the wet lEAves.

As in 'To Wish Myself Courage', Williams bolsters his formal experiments by thematising the rhythms used; of more lasting importance is the fact that the transitions between two-beat and nonmetrical lines are accomplished without difficulty.

In the lines so far discussed, this transition takes the form of a simple alternation. The poem's final four lines, however, achieve the move into nonmetre more subtly. They begin by picking up the refrain, but subtly altering it:

O mother of flames
You who have kept the fire burning!

The added words 'O' and 'who' break the ritual of the lines, turning them from a refrain into a direct appeal. With the second line a relative clause, an accent is forced on 'You', which in previous occurrences of the refrain is probably unaccented. Instead of a metrically simple two-beat, the reader of these lines is likely to produce a performance which may still contain two accents per line, but in which the distribution of those accents prevents them from functioning as beats:

/ o mother of flAmes
/ you who have kept the fire bUrning! /

'You' and 'bur-' are simply too far apart to function as acceptable beats. The prominence on 'kept' serves to keep the line intonationally afloat, but the line's slight note of panic is likely to work against the evenness of tempo needed to establish these three prominences as elements in a three- or four-beat metre. The final lines complete the move into nonmetricality:

/ lo, i am hElpless!

/ would gOd / they had taken me wIth them! /

The two-beat rhythm, associated throughout 'Crude Lament' with the reassurances of the nursery rhyme, has thus been broken down into a nonmetrical form in which two pitch accents remain, but no beats are inferred. The rhythms reflect, once more, the theme of the poem, but the ease with which metre is made nonmetre relies more on the inherent flexibility of the two-beat metre than on a simple thematic cue.

This technique of internal expansion of the two-beat metre has already been seen in 'Postlude', where it achieved a transition without awkwardness, not from metre to nonmetre, but between two-beat and four-beat metres. The technique has considerable importance in *The Tempers*. Most notably, it forms the basis of 'Contemporania', one of Williams's most successful early poems, and that which provides the clearest indications of the directions which his later work would take. The poem is usually read as a riposte to Ezra Pound's sequence of the same name, which had appeared in the April 1913 number of *Poetry* - in particular, to 'Salutation the Second', which begins:

> You were praised, my books,
> because I had just come from the country;
> I was twenty years behind the times
> so you found an audience ready.[33]

and goes on to praise the poet's more recent poetry as having moved beyond 'quaint devices'; these new poems 'do no work / and [...] will live forever'. Williams's poem does not strike quite the same pose:

> **CONTEMPORANIA**
>
> The corner of a great rain

---

[33]Pound, *Personae*, p. 94. The connection between the Williams and Pound 'Contemporania's is discussed in James Breslin, *William Carlos Williams: An American Artist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 15-17.

Steamy with the country
Has fallen upon my garden.

I go back and forth now
And the little leaves follow me
Talking of the great rain,
Of branches broken,
And the farmer's curses!

But I go back and forth
In this corner of a garden
And the green shoots follow me
Praising the great rain.

We are not curst together,
The leaves and I,
Framing devices, flower devices
And other ways of peopling
The barren country.
Truly it was a very great rain
That makes the little leaves follow me.[34]

Breslin interprets this poem as a statement of Williams's difference from Pound: while the poet applauds Pound's part in the 'great rain' of London-based literary innovation, to which he is peripheral but by which he is touched, he will nonetheless continue to follow his homelier path, as a 'humble and amiable citizen [...] a democratic poet'.[35]

From a formal point of view, the poem is extremely interesting. Williams's rhythms are not those of Pound. 'Salutation the Second' alludes to several metres, but if any can be said to be particularly present it is the four-beat, used in a supple and varied way:

You were praised, my books,
ŏ B [oB] o B [oB]
because I had just come from the country;
o B ŏ B ŏ B o [B]
I was twenty years behind the times
ŏ B ŏ B o B [oB]
so you found an audience ready.
ŏ B o B ŏ B [oB]

---

[34]*Collected Poems*, I, 16.
[35]Breslin, *William Carlos Williams*, p. 17.

Williams's poem is, as I read it, closer to the now familiar two-beat metre. The form is on the surface less spectacularly handled than that of Pound, yet its great suitability to Williams's poem becomes clear. The two-beat, as stated earlier, is a metre which if combined with a flexible syllable count is well adapted to the rhythms of everyday speech; the contrast between Pound's declamatory swagger and Williams's quieter tone is amply reflected in their rhythms. Moreover, as was seen in 'Crude Lament', the two-beat metre is one which can be cast off relatively easily. As 'Contemporania' proceeds, the metre becomes less satisfying as governing principle, with the result that the reader is likely eventually to switch to a nonmetrical approach.

In the opening two stanzas, each line invites two accents, and the lines are predominantly end-stopped, encouraging a perception of them as beat-based units in a growing metrical structure:

/ the corner of a great rAIn
o B ŏ B
/ stEA my with the country
B ŏ B
/ has fallen upon my gArden.
o B ŏ B o

/ i go back and fOrth
B ŏ B
/ and the little leaves fOllow me
ŏ B ŏ B o
/ talking of the great rAIn
B ŏ B
/ of branches brOken
o B o B o
/ and the farmer's cUrses
ŏ B o B o

I find the simplicity and subtle variety of this really lovely. To describe this as two-beat requires that the reader accept triple, and even quadruple, offbeats; if this is found unreasonable, the lines may instead be considered dipodic:

/ has fallen upon my gArden.
o B ŏ b o B o [b]

This scansion, although involving a minor change - two major beats, as opposed to two beats - seems to me undesirable, as it suggests an unsuitable evenness of tempo between the major beats. The placing of accents early and late in the line, and the fact that some lines have only one nonprominent syllable between accents, seem to encourage a performance that swings between each pair of accents, rather than progressing steadily through the intervening syllables.

A further subtlety is brought to the form of these lines by their falling into stanzas with odd numbers of lines - 3 and 5 respectively. Neither stanza can fall into a 4x2 pattern - if considered as dipodic, the 4x4 pattern - which would, in its perceptual strength and associations with more regular poetic forms, present considerable resistance to any such swing; within each stanza, then, the metre remains 2.2.2 [...]. Their combination, however, creates a gentle movement of accumulation, whose effects are most strongly felt in l. 8 - an exclamation which is also, by virtue of this accumulation, the closing line of an 8x2 structure. Similarly, the third stanza, which reiterates the poet's movements 'back and forth', naturally has a feeling of recapitulation and strength; this is undoubtedly enhanced by its being the first four-line stanza in the poem.

The fourth stanza marks a change in the poem; the point at which the two-beat rhythm begins to feel constraining. Its opening two lines contain a contrast in syllable-count greater than between any other pair in the poem, with the first allowing multiple accentual possibilities. None of them, however, is satisfactory within a two-beat rhythm

/ we are not cUrst together, /
/ we are not cUrst together, /
/ we are not curst togEther, /

Each of these patterns seems to do more damage to the sense of the line than is justified by the supposed metre; the statement made is syntactically very compact, and it is probably preferable for comprehension's sake to accent three of the possible sites:

/ we are not cUrst together, /

Such a performance cannot be accommodated within the two-beat metre, requiring a deliberateness of pace and articulation which will almost certainly cause three full beats to be inferred.

Although the stanza's second line might seem to reassert the metre:

/ the lEAves / and I, /

it has little chance to do so, given the change of pace which follows:

Framing devices, flower devices
And other ways of peopling
The barren country.

The first of these lines is the longest yet, in terms of syllable count; though it may be read with only two accents if both occurrences of 'device' are deaccented, it is probable that more than two beats will be felt. Again, 'And other ways of peopling' may well be read with two accents, but these can surely not be treated as beats, since such a performance would require a pause after 'peopling' - a verb that is not, according to *Webster's*, used intransitively. It would be very difficult to treat a line which would not normally be read as a completed intonation group as a unit within such a vulnerable metrical structure. The same is true of the line which follows. In consequence, the most likely performance of these lines is something as follows:

/ frAming devices, / flOwer devices /
and Other ways / of peopling

the barren cOUntry. /

Not only has the two-beat metre been left behind in such a reading of the stanza, but the enjambment on ll. 16-17 has broken the pattern of equivalence between line and intonation group which has been seen throughout the poem so far. The effect is of a sudden change of gear, as the line-by-line construction of the metrical performance is overtaken by the intonational overlap caused by the run-on line. This has a certain drama, so that the final couplet's concentration on the distant 'rain', rather than on the poet and garden at hand, appears nothing so much as ironic:

> Truly it was a very great rain
> That makes the little leaves follow me.

- especially since these lines exhibit a freedom from metre which the opening lines, for all their talk of the great things happening far off, had not enjoyed.

Its two-accent intonation groups, and the simplicity of the statements which these permit, help 'Contemporania' to achieve an effect of naturalness and fidelity to what is conceivable in conversation, as well as one of happy design. This design rests, in part, on the fluid relationship between accent and metre; if the four-beat metre needs to be blocked for nonmetre to be possible, and the five-beat allows metre and non metre to freely co-exist, the two-beat, as used by Williams, allows nonmetre to emerge from metre, and to do so with a minimum of difficulty for the reader.

B) LOSING METRE

The move out of metre within a poem is not the same as that within a career, and it would be a mistake to draw from individual poems within

The Tempers conclusions concerning the sources of Williams's subsequent writing; close comparison with later works would be necessary for this. Nonetheless, analysis of *The Tempers* enables markers for such comparisons to be set down.

Of the two metres which appear from *The Tempers* to provide the best environment for the emergence of nonmetricality, the two-beat has been suggested as particularly suited to Williams's practice. An important reason for this has just been stated; contributory factors discussed in the course of the previous section include its greater flexibility in the realisation of offbeats, and its proximity to the accentual structure of intonation groups found in everyday speech. However, other factors must be considered in any suggestion of the lessons which Williams might have learned from *The Tempers*, of a kind which formal analysis alone cannot reveal. Perhaps the most important are the generic associations of the five-beat metre, the major alternative as a springboard for nonmetricality. In later life, the pentameter came to symbolise for Williams the methods, and even the social structures, of an old, European world from which modern American poetry needed to escape. A discussion of 1948, for example, included this statement:

> Look! the fixed overall quality of all poems of the past was a plainly understandable counting. [...] synonymous with a society, uniform, and made up of easily measurable integers, racial and philosophical [...] We do not live in a sonnet world; we do not live even in an iambic world; certainly not in a world of iambic pentameters.[36]

At the time of publication of *The Tempers*, this association of the pentameter with the 'poems of the past' has not appeared in Williams's

---

[36] 'VS', *Touchstone* 1. 3 (1948), pp. 1-4; quoted in Cushman, p. 104.

critical and polemical writings.[37] Instead, it seems to surface in elements of his diction.

The transformation that took Williams's diction from the Keatsisms of the 1909 *Poems*:

> I've fond anticipation of a day
> O'erfilled with pure diversion presently...[38]

to the contemporary observations of *Al Que Quiere!*, eight years later:

> Splash the water up!
> (Splash it up, Sonny!)[39]

has long been recognised; in this, as in other areas, *The Tempers* stands as a halfway house. What has been less recognised is the interaction between diction and rhythm. Those poems which use or allude to the iambic pentameter can be conspicuously archaic:

> Lady of duskwood fastnesses,
> Thou art my lady ('First Praise')
>
> The loud clangor of pretenders
> Melteth before you ('Homage')
>
> And thou, beloved, art that godly thing.[40] ('Immortal')

In contrast, the collection's 2-beat and 4-beat poems always choose *you* over *thou*, *are* over *art*. The restriction of archaism to poems written around the iambic pentameter can be explained in several ways, from the rhythmic possibilities of the ending in *-eth* to a simple association of ideas. Whatever the cause, it seems that Williams's compositional processes at

---

[37]Perhaps the first such reference is his 1917 description of 'pentameters, hexameters and even [...] quatrains' as 'aristocratic forms': 'America, Whitman, and the Art of Poetry', p. 2.
[38]'The Uses of Poetry', *Collected Poems*, I, 21.
[39]'Promenade', *Collected Poems*, I, 75.
[40]*Collected Poems*, I, 4, 5, 7.

this stage included a stage linking 5-beat metres to archaic diction; subsequently, both were discarded.

From the point of view of metre, therefore, the clear lesson of *The Tempers* appears to be that the two-beat constitutes the best 'ghost metre', in Eliot's formulation, for Williams's poetic needs. It is certainly the case that his later collections show a predominance of short-lined poems in which, if any metre could be said to be present, it would be the two-beat.[41] If doubts about such a presence exist - which they certainly do - it is due to the other lesson which, it can be suggested, Williams drew from *The Tempers*: that of the metrical disruption that could be effected by enjambment.

In general, the lineation of *The Tempers* is extremely orthodox in its relationship to intonation, with tone units ending at the end of the line. It is for this reason that the effect of those exceptions to this tendency is so notable. One such was discussed in reference to 'Contemporania'

> And other ways of peopling
> The barren country.

The need to place an intonation-group boundary between a verb and its object contributes significantly to the reader's reluctance to read these lines as two-beat units, and thus to his or her freedom to choose whatever rhythm best suits the meaning. Equally effective is this example from 'Crude Lament':

> Crooked fingers that pull
> Fuel from among the wet leaves [.]

---

[41]George Bowering, 'The New American Prosody: A Look at the Problem of Notating "Free" Verse', *Kulchur* 4.15 (1964), 3-15 (p. 11), finds two 'bars' in each line of Williams's 'Tract' (1917); other poems in *Al Que Quiere!* can be similarly analysed.

The effect of run-on lines is particularly powerful in a context of two-beat metre, especially where offbeat distribution is as irregular as in the poems of *The Tempers*. In such poems, the metre depends on the reader's ability to place an accent at each end of the line, and on the co-ordination of linebreak with intonation-group boundary; if the second accent is missing, or needs to be realised in such a way as to signal the incompleteness of its intonation group, there is insufficient regularity or strength of structure elsewhere in the line for the metre to survive. Enjambment in the context of such a metre is a powerful factor in encouraging the transition into nonmetre; enjambment made systematic, as in much of Williams's later writing, makes any short metrical base disappear altogether.

4 CONCLUSION

In the role played by sound as a material of poetic form, two aspects of *The Tempers* have been discussed: the uses made of metre, and the methods adopted to escape metre's influence.

The poems' use of metre is primarily characterised by experiment in the irregular realisation of offbeats, achieved through variety in the distribution of non-prominent syllables. In some cases, such as 'Contemporania', this is completely successful; the two-beat metre of that poem, and its informal diction and syntax, are very accommodating of variety in metrical realisation. In others, however, there is a potential for conflict between linguistic cues and rhythmic form. In the opening stanza of 'Postlude', the use of mid-line implied offbeats within a perceptually strong, four-beat metre puts considerable pressure on the diction; that of sequences such as 'to sleep utterly' may not be convincing enough to withstand this pressure. Free-verse readings of 'Postlude' may in part be motivated by a desire to avert such clashes.

Several techniques are used to encourage the reader away from metre. These include the changes in syllable count and intonation of 'To Wish Myself Courage', and the more indirect approach adopted at the end of 'Crude Lament'. In that poem, the replacement of mid-line items likely to be assigned non-pitch prominences with those that require accent destabilises the two-beat metre from within. This achieves a subtle transition into nonmetricality, just as, in other poems, it brings about a change in metre. A third device is enjambment, whose potentially dramatic effect on metricality is seen in 'Crude Lament' and 'Contemporania': the two-beat metre of these poems cannot sustain the lack of a strong line-terminal accent.

In assessing the importance of *The Tempers* for Williams's subsequent development, both metre and the escape from it must be considered. Poems that use and depart from a two-beat metrical pattern can, as noted, be found in some of Williams's later work, while the relatively informal diction towards which the poetry of *The Tempers* is already turning increases the attractions of such a metre. However, any judgement of the long-term importance for Williams of such metrical patterns will depend, in part, on the degree to which they can be found to persist in the short-lined enjambed style in which much of his later poetry is written. The examples discussed in this chapter suggest that such co-existence is extremely difficult.

Chapter 6
Allen Ginsberg's *Cosmopolitan Greetings*: The Rewards of Performance

Despite his world-wide fame, perhaps unrivalled by that of any other contemporary English-language poet, the work of Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997) has been the subject of little prosodic criticism. A collection of the most notable critical responses was published in 1984, and remains extremely useful, as, since then, Ginsberg's biographers have rather outnumbered his critics.[1] None of the theoretical texts discussed in Chapter 1 devote space to Ginsberg's work.

One possible explanation of this neglect of the poet's form may be its difficulty, as Robert Anton Wilson has suggested.[2] Another is the paradoxical relationship which, in his public statements, Ginsberg seems to have had with the question of poetic form. He insisted on form's importance from the beginning of his career, and was a careful commentator on the prosody of other poets, particularly Blake and Pound; on the other hand, he often insisted on an expression-led poetics, epitomised in the slogan 'First Thought, Best Thought', in which form appeared to have little place. As a result, the importance of performance to Ginsberg's career has always been ambiguous: do his many public readings and recordings evidence the centrality of aural form to his work, or its need for maximum personal presence? Ginsberg's quick ear as analyst of other poets makes it a pity that the form of his own poetry has not been much

---

[1] *On the Poetry of Allen Ginsberg*, ed. by Lewis Hyde (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984). Other critics are discussed during the course of the chapter.
[2] Robert Anton Wilson, 'The Poet as Radar System', in Hyde, pp. 96-100 (p. 96).

studied, although the main cause for regret is the fact that it is apparent to any reader of 'Howl', 'Kaddish' and much of Ginsberg's other poetry that there are extremely interesting forms at work.

Cosmopolitan Greetings: Poems 1986-1992 was published in 1994.[3] It was quite widely reviewed, although, following the pattern just described, commentators tended to limit their remarks to the themes of the volume's poetry, and had little to say about its forms.[4] It has been chosen over Ginsberg's other volumes for discussion in this chapter for several reasons, one of which is simply chronological variety, since its date of publication is much more recent than that of other work considered in this thesis. More important, however, is the range of forms which the volume displays.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. Firstly, it seeks to examine whether the performance-based approach to form suggested in this thesis is well-suited to a poet so associated with it. The grounding of this approach in a reader other than the poet implies a close attention to the cues to performance that may be found in the printed text. Secondly, it attempts to describe the different forms and formal devices which can be found within *Cosmopolitan Greetings*. There is, unfortunately, insufficient space to discuss the many metrical poems in *Cosmopolitan Greetings*; such lovely poems as 'Lunchtime', in loose pentameters, and 'Put Down Your Cigarette Rag', an invitation to improvise around a four-beat metre, are therefore not discussed in this chapter. However, although only

---

[3]Allen Ginsberg, *Cosmopolitan Greetings: Poems 1986-1992* (New York: HarperCollins; London: Penguin, 1994).

[4]A full list of reviews published before the end of 1994 is included in *The Response to Allen Ginsberg 1926-1994: A Bibliography of Secondary Sources*, ed. by Bill Morgan (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996). Those used in the preparation of this chapter include Lawrence Sail, 'Recent Poetry', *Stand* 36.4 (Autumn 1995), 77-83; John Haines, 'Poetry Chronicle', *Hudson Review*, 48 (1996), 663-71; Michael Horovitz, 'Pinch'd and Spooned', *Poetry Review*, 85.1 (Spring 1995), 82-4. Marjorie Perloff, 'A Lion In Our Living Room: Reading Allen Ginsberg in the Eighties', in *Poetic License: Essays on Modernist and Postmodernist Lyric* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1990), pp. 199-230, describes the poet's distant relationship with reviewers.

nonmetrical poems are examined, they illustrate a variety of rhythmic and intonational possibilities. Finally, the chapter tries to suggest ways in which the forms described may function within the poems. This threefold ambition requires, in a short space, a relatively restricted sample of poems; those that have been found most interesting have been the most considered. Nonetheless, the conclusions drawn attempt to be of more general application within the collection, and within a consideration of the possibilities of nonmetrical form.

There are many shapes and sizes of nonmetrical poem in *Cosmopolitan Greetings.* Because of this, it has been decided to divide the poems into two broad groups: those in which the line is most frequently longer than the page is wide, and wraps around into a longer, indented group, and those in which it is not. This is a crude distinction, but it does appear to reflect some important formal differences, as well as the fact that Ginsberg's best-known formal technique, the long line, is defined in precisely this way.

1 THE LONG LINE

The long line, which wraps around the justified right-hand margin of the page to continue, indented, on subsequent lines, is very widely employed within *Cosmopolitan Greetings*: 21 of the volume's 56 poems make use of it. This, for example, is the opening of 'Improvisation in Beijing':

> I write poetry because the English word Inspiration comes from Latin
> Spiritus, breath, I want to breathe freely.
> I write poetry because Walt Whitman gave world permission to speak
> with candor.
> I write poetry because Walt Whitman opened up poetry's verse-line for
> unobstructed breath.
> [...]
> I write poetry because W.C. Williams living in Rutherford wrote New
> Jerseyesque "I kick yuh eye," asking, how measure that in iam-
> bic pentameter?

this, that of 'You Don't Know It':

> In Russia the tyrant cockroach mustache ate 20 million souls
> and you don't know it, you don't know it
> In Czechoslovakia the police ate the feet of a generation that can't walk
> and you don't know it, you don't know it
> In Poland police state double agent cancer grew large as Catholic
> Church Frankenstein the state itself a Gulag Ship
> and you don't know it, you don't know it
> [...]
> you know Tito but you don't know it
> you say you don't know it these exiles from East Europe complaining
> about someday Nicaragua Gulag
> cause you don't know it was the Writers Union intellectuals of Moscow
> Vilnius Minsk Leningrad and Tblisi
> saying "Invade Immediately" their Curse on your revolution
> No you don't know it's not N.Y. Review of Books...

this, that of 'Graphic Winces':

> In highschool when you crack your front tooth bending down too fast
> over the porcelain water fountain
> or raise the tuna sandwich to your open mouth and a cockroach tickles
> your knuckle
> or step off the kitchen ladder on the ball of your foot hear the piercing
> meow of a soft kitten

while these are the opening lines of 'The Charnel Ground':

> Upstairs Jenny crashed her car & became a living corpse, Jake sold
> grass, the white-bearded potbelly leprechaun silent climbed their
> staircase
> Ex-janitor John from Poland averted his eyes, cheeks flushed with
> vodka, wine who knew what
> as he left his groundfloor flat, refusing to speak to the inhabitant of
> Apt. 24
> who'd put his boyfriend in Bellevue...[5]

From a formal point of view, there is both variety and commonality in these poems. There is variety in the length to which the line can run, in the extent to which it is combined, as in 'You Don't Know It', with shorter lines, and in the use or non-use of punctuation, while common factors, in all but 'The Charnel Ground', include an extensive use of both syntactic

---

[5]*Cosmopolitan Greetings*, pp. xiii, 1, 18, 96.

and semantic parallelism. The centrality of anaphora to the long line in Ginsberg has often been noted, and seen as an element which associates the poet with Hebrew and Biblical composition; it is also, it may be assumed, one of the factors which caused the Hudson Review to describe 'Improvisation in Beijing', which is *Cosmopolitan Greetings*'s opening poem, as 'a typical repetitive rant'.[6]

The long line was most famously used by Ginsberg in the opening section of 'Howl' (1956), in lines which have become emblematic both of the poet's method and of his vatic public persona. In texts written following 'Howl"s publication, the poet pointed to his sources and inspirations - particularly Whitman and Christopher Smart - and described the poem's formal logic. One version of this comes in a letter to John Hollander:

> Part one uses repeated base *who*, as a sort of kithara BLANG, homeric (in my imagination) to mark off each statement, each rhythmic unit. So that's experiment with longer and shorter variations on a fixed base - the principle being, that each line has to be contained within the elastic of one breath. [7]

This 'explanation' of the long line contains three different elements. The reference to 'the elastic of one breath' is physiological; that to 'repeated base' and 'statement' is grammatical; the apposition of 'statement' and 'rhythmic unit' suggests that the poem uses a grammatical entity as a stimulus to the perceptual and cognitive processes associated with rhythm. Each of these different elements must be assumed to play a role in the form of the long-lined poem.

The account of Ginsberg's long line as based in the 'elastic of one breath' is undoubtedly the most widespread. Ginsberg himself made

---

[6]Kirby-Smith, Ch. 7; Haines, p. 668.
[7]Allen Ginsberg, letter to John Hollander, September 7, 1958; repr. in *Howl: Original Draft Facsimile*, ed. by Barry Miles (New York: Harper & Row, 1986; Harmondsworth: Viking, 1987), pp. 162-164 (p. 163).

frequent reference to this - in 1972, for example, he stated that his rhythmic units were 'basically breathing exercise forms' - and accounts of his poetry continue to be written in which the only reference to form is to the respiratory needs of either poet or performer.[8] From a phonetic point of view, what is known about the links between speech and respiration seems to justify this approach, at least in the first instance. According to Alan Cruttenden, both male and female speakers can count reasonably slowly up to twenty without taking a breath and without any strain at all.[9] If, in connected speech, it is assumed that the time taken between accented syllables is roughly equivalent to that which elapses between separately enunciated numbers, then the potential accent count in Ginsberg's lines is a fair guide to the challenge which they pose to the reader's lungpower; looking through the opening section of 'Howl', for example, and reading lines aloud, it will be found that they contain, at their shortest, something like ten accents:

> I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked

and at their longest, well over thirty: these lines are a considerable challenge to the reader.

However, an explanation of Ginsberg's line in terms of breath is probably not one that can take formal analysis very far. Intuitively, it is difficult to see the taking of a breath as a device capable, even when repeated at regular intervals, of inducing much cognitive variety or

---

[8]Ginsberg quoted in Paul Portugués, 'Allen Ginsberg's Visions and the Growth of his Poetics of Prophecy', in *Poetic Prophecy in Western Literature*, ed. by Jan Wojcik and Raymond-Jean Frontain (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson, 1984), pp. 157-73 (p. 168). Breath-based accounts of the long line include Wesling and Bollobas, 'Free Verse', p. 425, and Brian Docherty, 'Allen Ginsberg', in *American Poetry: The Modernist Ideal*, ed. by Clive Bloom and Brian Docherty (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 199-217 (p. 203).

[9]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 30.

richness, except, perhaps, within a meditational or devotional context.[10] Evidence from phonetics suggests that the act is, indeed, fairly inconsequential; according to Cruttenden, 'we pause for other reasons and seize the opportunity to take a breath'.[11] These 'other reasons' are the cues to intonation-group boundary and pause described in Chapter 4, including syntax, hesitation, length of clause, and so on. If, in reading 'Howl' or any other of Ginsberg's long-line poems, a reader takes a breath at the end of each line, it is because s/he is induced to pause by one of these cues, and takes advantage of the opportunity which this affords to breathe. While the stated association with breathing may, therefore, be a partial explanation of both compositional and performative phenomena, it is inadequate to any attempt to understand the way the long line might work as a unit of form.

The grammatical approach to Ginsberg's work, suggested by his references to 'statement' and 'repeated base', has not, as far as I know, been developed. If it were to be, criticism might look to the kind of phrasal analysis applied by Gay Wilson Allen and subsequent critics to Whitman, to the grammetrics of Donald Wesling, or to the complex analyses of information flow proposed by Richard Cureton.[12] However, it is probable that a phrasal or syntactic account could uncover relatively little. Paul Breslin has noted, in an interesting, although sceptical account of 'Howl''s first section, its extreme syntactic repetitiveness:

> The incantatory syntax [...] draws attention to the poem as speech rather than as an object for contemplation [...] Moreover, the syntactical complexities one associates with nuance are missing. There is little variety of sentence construction and, therefore, little complexity in the relations among words. To say this is not necessarily to condemn the poem, which aims at force, not subtlety. But the effect of the steady accumulation of parallel subordinate clauses goes beyond the suggestion of passionate speech. Like the catalogue passages in Whitman, the first section of 'Howl' implies by its syntax a view of reality: the many parts of the

---

[10]Ginsberg's work may well be thought to draw on these contexts, but must be assumed to be performed most widely outside them.

[11]Cruttenden, *Intonation*, p. 30.

[12]See Introduction.

> world simply exist, next to each other, without conflict and without hierarchy of greater and lesser, and they are unified not by complex relations among the parts, but by a simple and all-embracing relation between any part and the whole.[13]

Leaving to one side Breslin's broader conclusions, and focusing on syntax alone, similar comments could be made about the long-line poems in *Cosmopolitan Greetings*. These are not poems of great syntactic variety. Most striking in this respect, perhaps, is 'Improvisation in Beijing': not only is each line coextensive with the same syntactical unit, but the unit concerned is a full sentence; and a full sentence of the same type, a statement, consisting for the most part of the same sequence of clauses, introduced by the same verb group; and this over three full pages. The phrasal analyses of Gay Wilson Allen, which seek alternation and variation from line to line, of Donald Wesling, describing line-syntax disjuncture, and of Richard Cureton, which assume the importance of a centroidal structure within poetic texts, could achieve little with such poems - except, perhaps, to find them uninteresting.

The third approach, then, is to investigate more closely the way in which grammar and rhythm may intersect; to question the assumptions of a one-to-one correlation between the two that are implied by Breslin's assertion that, because there is little variety of sentence construction, there is 'therefore, little complexity in the relations among words'. In the perspective adopted in this thesis, this suggests an investigation of the phonetic consequences of Ginsberg's long-line techniques. Are there 'rhythmic' influences on the listener which grammatical or informational analysis cannot describe? Ginsberg himself suggested as much in comments made in conversation in 1968:

---

[13]Paul Breslin, *The Psycho-Political Muse: American Poetry since the Fifties* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 24-25.

> My basic measure is a unit of thought, so to speak...And the reason it's a unit of thought is that's what you wrote down on that line. If you're writing a short line anyway. *So it's not so much a unit of sound as a unit of thought*. But it also turns out that if you vocalize the thought it's also a unit of sound and that somehow or other the squiggles for the units of sound are identical to the squiggles of thought. And they're just as interesting as units of sound as units of thought; if you pronounce them aloud they make a funny kind of rhythm.[14]

An approach to Ginsberg's poetry can be imagined that would take seriously his statement that 'somehow or other' the units of thought correspond to units of sound, and to attempt to discover in what their 'funny kind of rhythm' might consist.

Such an approach will be attempted in the first of the two sections which follow. Which phonetic devices are available to readers in the patterning of lines and groups of lines - and how likely are they to be used?

A) EFFECTS ACROSS LINES

It has already been noted that the long line in *Cosmopolitan Greetings* ends, except in rare cases of enjambment, with a strong syntactic inducement to intonation-group boundary, accompanied by pause. This allows for a preliminary sound-based definition: the long line is a clause or series of clauses whose end-point is reached when the syntax and/or lexis of the group fulfils the pattern set up by previous lines, at which point a pause warns the listener of this fact. Pause is certainly an effective boundary marker, which at the end of a syntactic unit is likely to be preceded by a slowing of pace, and a lengthening of syllables, reinforcing its impact.[15] In Ginsberg's long lines, the line-terminal boundary markers, coupled with the anaphoric structure of the lines, induce a sense of the

---

[14]Allen Ginsberg, 'Improvised Poetics', in *Composed on the Tongue: Literary Conversations, 1967-1977*, ed. by Donald Allen (San Francisco: Grey Fox Press, n.d., 3rd printing 1994), pp. 18-62 (p. 21).

[15]Vaissière, p. 60. Vaissière also makes the point that pauses between sentences are likely to be longer than those within sentences (p. 54).

'layering' of linguistic material in consciousness, typical of end-stopped poetry.

However, pause is a relatively static phenomenon, without prosodic implications that reach beyond the immediately preceding syllables. The same is not true of the intonation-group boundary by which it is cued: any such boundary implies a foregoing intonation group. The length of these long lines makes it extremely likely that they will consist of not one, but a series of intonation groups. This, for example, is a possible performance of the opening lines of 'Improvisation in Beijing':

/ I write poetry / because the English word Inspiration / comes from Latin Spiritus, / breath, / I want to breathe freely /
I write poetry / because Walt Whitman / gave world permission / to speak with candor. /
I write poetry / because Walt Whitman opened up poetry's verse-line/ for unobstructed breath /

One way to consider each of these long lines as a formal, prosody-based unit, therefore, is to consider the shape of intonational change along their whole length - *not* merely at the pause-cueing final boundary.

In Chapter 4, the concept of *paratone* was discussed, as a means by which speakers can use sequences of intonation groups to structure discourse. The major topical orientations of a text - its 'conceptual paragraphs' - are signalled by major paratones: the pitch level of the onset, or first rhythmically prominent syllable of the major paratone, is high. The subdivisions within that 'paragraph', and thus within the major paratone, are signalled by minor paratones: these are pitch sequences whose onset height is placed at one of three levels, and which end on a low nucleus. Those which begin high are those which begin new major paratones; those which begin at mid-level are those which represent paratactic additions to or extensions of material presented in the previous paratone; and those which begin low represent hypotactic subordinations to or inclusions in the

material presented in the previous paratone. Very little work on the poetic potential of paratone has appeared. Poetry such as that of *Cosmopolitan Greetings*, whose simplicity of syntax and structure will make any such use of pitch both easily uttered and easily perceived, may be a good starting-point for such enquiry.

The poem that will be analysed with a view to the use of paratone is that which, from a syntactic point of view, is most repetitive: 'Improvisation in Beijing'. This is a long poem, of forty-four lines, a fact which has both its advantages - the reader has the discoursal 'space' in which to perceive relatively long units of form - and disadvantages: a line-by-line analysis would be too lengthy to be practical. The procedure adopted here is therefore as follows. The poem's opening three lines are discussed in detail, and a notation is given of one possible performance of a longer section of the poem, ll. 1-14. Explanation of some of the decisions implied in that performance is followed by a consideration of their potential formal consequences. It is assumed throughout that, since each line comprises a complete sentence, each will close with a fall to low pitch and pause, and that in consequence no minor paratone will include more than one line.

The first line of the poem, must, by definition, be deemed to signal a major new topical orientation. It is therefore very likely to be performed with a high onset on its first prominent syllable - *I*. This opens the poem's first major paratone, which in this thesis is signalled by ***[H]***:

> **[H]** / I write poetry / because the English word Inspiration / comes from Latin Spiritus, / breath, / I want to breathe freely. /

If, as is likely given the full stop, l. 1 has ended with a fall to low in the speaker's pitch range, the speaker will, in coming to l. 2, begin a new minor paratone. S/he has a choice. The line adds information to the

opening proposition, by stating another motivation for the poet's work; as such, it may be pitched so as to continue the major paratone begun in l. 1, with a mid-level onset on *I* signalling its status as addition or extension:

> [M] / I write poetry / because Walt Whitman / gave world permission / to speak with candor. /

Alternatively, it may be interpreted as signalling a new topical orientation, on the same level of importance within the discourse as l. 1: every reason which the poem gives for its own existence, at least at this stage of proceedings, is on this interpretation of the highest interest. If this is the case, l. 2 will begin a new major paratone, signalled by another ***[H]***.

It would be very difficult to make the same case for l. 3, in which the words *because Walt Whitman* are directly repeated from l. 2; to begin a third major paratone in l. 3 would, in such a context, imply a relationship to discourse structure approaching the amnesiac. The repeated words are very likely to be deaccented, at least in part, and subsumed within the intonation group which follows them:

> / i write pOetry / because walt whItman / gave world permIssion / to speak with cAndor. /
> i write pOetry / because walt whitman opened up poetry's verse-lIne/ for Unobstructed breath /

Such deaccented material may be 'played down' in every sense of the term: it is likely to be placed in anacrusis, and uttered at a low pitch level. This, in turn, encourages a low onset level in the intonation group which precedes it, and which opens the line. The line is thus presented as in a subordinate relationship to l. 2; this will imply a low pitch level on *I*, and in consequence a low-onset minor paratone.

A suggested notation of the paratones found in the poem's opening 14 lines, with the detail of individual intonation groups omitted, is as follows:

[H] I write poetry because the English word Inspiration comes from Latin Spiritus, breath, I want to breathe freely.
[H] I write poetry because Walt Whitman gave world permission to speak with candor.
[L] I write poetry because Walt Whitman opened up poetry's verse-line for unobstructed breath.
[M] I write poetry because Ezra Pound saw an ivory tower, bet on one wrong horse, gave poets permission to write spoken vernacular idiom.
[L] I write poetry because Pound pointed young western poets to look at Chinese writing word pictures.
[M] I write poetry because W.C. Williams living in Rutherford wrote New Jerseyesque "I kick yuh eye," asking, how measure that in iambic pentameter?
[H] I write poetry because my father was poet my mother from Russia spoke Communist, died in a mad house.
[M] I write poetry because young friend Gary Snyder sat to look at his thoughts as part of external phenomenal world just like a 1984 conference table.
[M] I write poetry because I suffer, born to die, kidneystones and high blood pressure, everybody suffers.
[M] I write poetry because I suffer confusion not knowing what other people think.
[L] I write because poetry can reveal my thoughts, cure my paranoia also other people's paranoia.
[M] I write poetry because my mind wanders subject to sex politics Buddhadharma meditation.
[H] I write poetry to make accurate picture my own mind.
[H] I write poetry because I took Bodhisattva's Four Vows: Sentient creatures to liberate are numberless in the universe, my own greed anger ignorance to cut thru's infinite, situations I find myself in are countless as the sky okay, while awakened mind path's endless.

The decisions taken in this reading can be interpreted in terms both of the affective or informational weight of different lines, and of the performative need of speaker and listener. For example, the two opening lines are, as discussed above, each treated as introducing major new topics, and pitched high, thereby implying that, despite the introductory anaphoras, each line is worthy of independent attention. As the poem continues, however, this repeated signalling of a new topic can probably not be maintained without fatiguing both speaker and listener, and so the 'default' onset level becomes that of a mid-level minor paratone, as in lines 4, 6, 8, 9, 12. The introduction of a new major paratone is reserved for those lines which seem to follow the closing of a particular kind of material - thus, l. 7 signals a turn away from the listing of poets - or to contain material of particular weight within the poem: thus, l. 13 and 14, which constitute, respectively, a

concise statement of an apparently expressionist poetics, and a reminder that this poetics is to be seen within a predominantly religious context.

At other points in this performance, the performer has decided to treat a line as subordinate to its predecessor; thus, the second mention of Ezra Pound, in l. 5, causes that line to be treated as a hypotactic, low-onset paratone, as was the case for the second mention of Whitman, earlier in the poem. Again, the deaccenting of repeated material will reinforce the effect of the choice of low tone. This is a strategy repeated several times within 'Improvisation in Beijing', and many times within *Cosmopolitan Greetings* as a whole. Lines 9-11 are a sophisticated example of this; this is a possible reading with accents noted:

> [M] / i write pOetry / because i sUffer, / born to dIE, / kidneystones and high blOOd pressure, / Everybody suffers. /
> [M] / i write poetry because i suffer confUsion / not knowing what other people thInk. /
> [L] / i wrIte / because poetry can reveal mY thoughts, / cure my paranOia / also other pEOple's paranoia. /

The use of intonation to structure discourse is, here as above, twofold. On the one hand, the repetition of material, and its subtle alteration, enables patterns of accenting and deaccenting to follow, for example, the shifts in the use of the item *suffer*, from a first-person intransitive, through third-person intransitive, to first person transitive (ll. 9-10); or in the topic 'thought', from third-person verb in l. 10, to noun associated with the first person in l. 11; and in the association of *paranoia* with the first, and then with the third person. These mutations undoubtedly contribute to the effectiveness of the poem's universalist rhetoric, enclosing self and others within a restricted syntactic and lexical compass; they also make for a very attractive shape, in the series of intonational chiasmuses to which they give rise:

i sUffer
Everybody suffers.
i suffer confUsion

other people thInk
mY thoughts

my paranOia
other pEOple's paranoia.

At the same time, the use of paratone to suggest the relationships between lines binds these lines together, expressing their relatedness (all are in the same major paratone) as well as their interdependence (the low minor paratone of l. 11 denotes its subordination to l. 12). This low onset on l. 11 is further encouraged by its being the first line in which the anaphoric *I write poetry* is contracted to the simpler *I write*.

Having identified paratone as a possible resource in this poem, and by implication in other long-line poems, the question of its formal potential is raised. Line by line, it is likely to be of the sort identified above: binding some groups of lines together, separating others, and providing a ground against which other, more local intonational effects stand out. However, it is in their pervasion of the poem as a whole that paratones may be of most interest.

The overlaying of a varying, but coherent pattern of pitch movement onto an unchanging syntactical base has, at least to my ears, powerful perceptual and cognitive possibilities; these are not easy to describe, but seem to have something of the relationship between rhythm and metre in a metrical poem. The sentence type *I write poetry because...* is repeated, in 'Improvisation in Beijing', with such regularity as to acquire a kind of abstract necessity, similar to that of metre - a template for all possible utterances within the confines of the poem's performance. A reading insensitive to paratones will misplace this abstractness by aligning intonational realisation exactly with grammatical structure: if every line is

given the same intonational realisation, then the poem becomes exactly as the *Hudson Review* describes it - a 'repetitive rant'. One which uses the syntax as a form against which to pattern a series of pitch movements which take the sentence as their starting point, but which imply relationships between sentences which the syntax alone does not supply, achieves a potentially rich sense of contrast and harmony. It also, in creating a distinction between the intonational choices of the reader and the syntactic given of the printed text, allows for an active and complex involvement with the world implied in the poem.

It is clear that the choice of paratones suggested here has no claim to definitive status: no scheme of assigning paratones according to syntax, semantics or informational flow can guarantee their presence. They are decisions based very much in performance - as, for example, in the fade from the early association of each new line with a major paratone, to the subsequent enclosing of them within larger groups of lines, a decision motivated by the need not to demand an excess of renewed attention from the listener. These are precisely the kind of considerations by which any careful reader of poetry is likely to be confronted, yet it is clear that, as things stand, they are not common critical currency. However, that another reader might choose other paratones is of less importance, it is suggested, than the fact that these paratones, which are part of everyday speech, are available to all, and that, if they are used, a pattern analogous to that described here will inevitably result. The *how* of paratoning, at least in the first instance, may therefore be less important than the *whether*.

If this is accepted, then the *whether* becomes an interesting critical question, and one which raises further questions that are central both to Ginsberg's poetic method, and to the response to his work. The use of paratoning implies, in Brazil's terms, a direct orientation towards the language of the poem: the poem must be treated, not as a series of

sentences, but as the script for an utterance that responds to discoursal relationships as they unfold, and attempts to locate them within a pragmatic context. If the reader cannot find an acceptable point for himself or herself within that context - if s/he cannot happily assume the poem's voice - then those formal devices which depend on this assumption, this direct orientation, will fail to function.

'Improvisation in Beijing' uses several strategies to encourage direct orientation. The most subtle are probably the invitations to deaccent described above; if the reader deaccents an item when it becomes 'old stuff' within the poem - and especially when that item is as charged as *Whitman* or *paranoia* - then he or she has gone part of the way towards a full participation in the poem's discoursal world. Also important are those very features of structural repetitiveness and lexical anaphora which may on a first reading seem so unpromising: if each line of the text begins in exactly the same way, the reader is encouraged to supply variety in performance. These are strategies which ask a lot of the reader; but they also ask a lot of the poem, since a reader is perfectly free to refuse this engagement - to read the poem 'obliquely', or, more simply, not to read it aloud at all.

Many reasons might explain such a refusal. Two, however, seem particularly relevant to the poetry of Ginsberg. The most important is the strength of the persona which his poems create, and the directness with which that persona is presented. Ginsberg sometimes compared himself to Whitman in this regard but, as Brian Docherty has pointed out, Ginsberg could write a much more directly personal poetry than Whitman.[16] This directness may occasionally pose problems for readers seeking a direct orientation with the world of Ginsberg's poems. The *Hudson Review*'s

---

[16]Docherty, p. 20.

account of *Cosmopolitan Greetings*, for example, took particular exception to the poem 'Sphincter', which begins:

> I hope my good old asshole holds out
> 60 years it's been mostly OK[17]

It is perhaps fair to say that such a poem requires a brave reader if all its intonational potential is to be revealed; which is a shame, for that potential is there. For my part, I find the poem 'Salutations to Fernando Pessoa' - which begins:

> Every time I read Pessoa I think
> I'm better than he is [...]

- very difficult to perform.[18] Reading it in silence, I can entertain the possibility that it contains a more genuinely self-directed irony than at first sight appears; reading it aloud, this is beyond me.

B) EFFECTS WITHIN LINES

If a long-line poem is held together by intonational links between lines and groups of lines, its internal dynamics appear to grow outwards from repeated patterns of accented syllables. Ginsberg's poetry frequently seems to demand that the reader express a clear distinction between prominent and unprominent syllables, similar to that associated with accentual metres. Robert Anton Wilson has described the process of reading one of Ginsberg's most rhythmically complex poems, 'Kaddish', as that of following the poet as he searches for his 'basic beat'; this captures well the feeling which Ginsberg's work can instil in its readers that, despite the nonmetricality of the work, each potential accent must be given as much

---

[17]*Cosmopolitan Greetings*, p. 8; Haines, p. 669.
[18]*Cosmopolitan Greetings*, pp. 34-35 (p. 34).

weight as if it had an accentual metre to sustain.[19] This feeling seems to be actively encouraged by aspects of the poetry.

Most generalised is probably the relative paucity of grammatical items, which are of low accentual potential. Many of the poems in *Cosmopolitan Greetings* have, like 'Improvisation in Beijing', a simple syntax, and use few conjunctions. Moreover, within the clause, articles, pronouns and auxiliary verbs are sometimes suppressed:

> One poet highschool teacher fell dead mysterious heart dysrhythmia,
> konked over
>
> How many more years eyes closed 9 A.M. wake worrying
> the ulcer in my cheek is't cancer?
>
> Scandal hundreds homeless under Brooklyn Bridge freezing Xmas &
> New Year's Eve! Millions homeless in America![20]

The result of this compact syntax is an increased density of pitch accents, as 'new stuff' items succeed each other without the intervening rhythmic buffers which function words would normally supply.

The diverse formal potential of these rhythms within the long-lined poem is illustrated by two poems that contrast in many ways. The first is 'On the Cremation of Chögyam Trungpa, Vidyadhara', which uses patterns of accent to create vertical connections between lines, and encourage reflection on the material thus linked together:

> I noticed the grass, I noticed the hills, I noticed the highways,
> I noticed the dirt road, I noticed car rows in the parking lot
> I noticed ticket takers, I noticed the cash and checks & credit cards,
> I noticed buses, noticed mourners, I noticed their children in red
> dresses,
> I noticed the entrance sign, noticed retreat houses, noticed blue &
> yellow Flags–
> noticed the devotees, their trucks and buses, guards in Khaki uniforms
> I noticed crowds, noticed misty skies, noticed the all-pervading smiles &
> empty eyes–

---

[19]Wilson, p. 97.

[20]'The Charnel Ground', *Cosmopolitan Greetings*, pp. 96-99 (p. 97); 'May Days 1988', *ibid.*, pp. 37-39 (p. 38); 'Elephant in the Meditation Hall', *ibid.*, pp. 43-44 (p. 44).

I noticed pillows, colored red & yellow, square pillows and round–
I noticed the Tori Gate, passers-through bowing, a parade of men &
women in formal dress–
noticed the procession, noticed the bagpipe, drum, horns, noticed high
silk head crowns and saffron robes, noticed the three piece suits,
I noticed the palanquin, an umbrella, the stupa painted with jewels the
colors of the four directions–
amber for generosity, green for karmic works, noticed the white for
Buddha, red for the heart–
thirteen worlds on the stupa hat, noticed the bell handle and umbrella,
the empty head of the cement bell–
noticed the corpse to be set in the head of the bell–
noticed the monks chanting, horn plaint in our ears, smoke rising from
atop the firebrick empty bell–
noticed the crowds quiet, noticed the Chilean poet, noticed a Rainbow,
I noticed the Guru was dead, I noticed his teacher bare breasted watch-
ing the corpse burn in the stupa,
noticed mourning students sat crosslegged before their books, chanting
devotional mantras,
gesturing mysterious fingers, bells & brass thunderbolts in their hands
I noticed flame rising above flags & wires & umbrellas & painted orange
poles
I noticed the sky, noticed the sun, a rainbow round the sun, light misty
clouds drifting over the Sun–
I noticed my own heart beating, breath passing thru my nostrils
my feet walking, eyes seeing, noticing smoke above the corpse-fir'd
monument
I noticed the path downhill, noticed the crowd moving toward buses
I noticed food, lettuce salad, I noticed the Teacher was absent,
I noticed my friends, noticed our car the blue Volvo, a young boy held
my hand
our key in the motel door, noticed a dark room, noticed a dream
and forgot, noticed oranges lemons & caviar at breakfast,
I noticed the highway, sleepiness, homework thoughts, the boy's nippled
chest in the breeze
as the car rolled down hillsides past green woods to the water,
I noticed the houses, balconies overlooking a misted horizon, shore &
old worn rocks in the sand
I noticed the sea, I noticed the music, I wanted to dance.

May 28, 1987, 2:30-3:15 A.M.[21]

The overall movement of this text is that from attention to action: after 31 lines in which the only main clause has been *I noticed*, the last line's *I wanted* suggests quite persuasively that the one can proceed naturally from the other. In constructing this general scheme, the poem displays some of the techniques of repetition and variety described above. Most lines are

---

[21]*Cosmopolitan Greetings*, pp. 25-6.

strongly anaphoric, for example, and end-stopped both syntactically and by punctuation.

It is likely that the syntax and punctuation of 'On the Cremation...' will induce a one-to-one correspondence between comma-delimited clauses and intonation groups. These groups are, on the whole, relatively short, and the relative lack of narrative continuity from one to another means that each item presented is likely to be considered 'new stuff', in need of an accent. Accent distribution is, in consequence, fairly unambiguous, although one exception is the repeated verb *noticed*, which will be accented, or not, as the reader thinks fit. It seems most likely that the effect of the anaphora will be to draw attention away from the repeated material, and onto the noun groups and the accentual patterns which they form. This is how the opening lines may be thought likely to be performed:

/ i noticed the grAss, / i noticed the hIlls, / i noticed the hIghways, /
i noticed the dirt rOAd, / i noticed car rows in the pArking lot /
i noticed tIcket takers, / i noticed the cash and checks & crEdit cards, /
i noticed bUses, / noticed mOUrners, / i noticed their children in red
drEsses, /
i noticed the Entrance sign, / noticed retrEAt houses, / noticed blue &
yellow FlAgs– /
noticed the devotEEs, / their trucks and bUses, / guards in khaki Uniforms /
i noticed crOwds, / noticed misty skIEs, / noticed the all-pervading smiles
& empty Eyes– /

A constant formal element in these lines is the presence of a three-part pattern, manifested in the distribution of both accents and intonation groups; l. 1, in which (since the only accents are the nuclei) there are three of each, provides the template in this respect. Five of these seven lines contain three intonation groups; one of those which does not, l. 2, nevertheless contains three accents, and the other, l. 3, like l. 2 contains two intonation groups, the second of which contains three accents.

This repeated 'threeness' provides a basic rhythmic motif, which continues, with variations, throughout the poem, and returns in the final

line. Its diverse manifestations draw the performer from group to group, and give the poem a strong sense of onward movement. For example, ll. 1-2 displays a progressive expansion of the accentual structure of the noun group. The two monosyllables *grass* and *hills* give way to the alliterating *highways*; this disyllable - once two separate words, now lexicalised as a compound with the stress pattern /x - is succeeded by the noncompound pair *dirt road*, whose stress pattern is its opposite: x/. The next noun group, *car rows*, is not a compound that I recognise, and may well take two accents; yet the more prominent is almost certain to be the first, which brings back the pattern /x; this is then extended to /xx in l. 2's final noun group, *parking lot*. These shifting accentual patterns create the sensation of continuity and development in a series of clauses that remain syntactically independent until the end of l. 2; they also create variation around the tripartite base.

At the same time, vertical connections are created between groups that share an accentual pattern in different lines. These begin to become significant in l. 3, which continues the process of extending the accentual complexity of each succeeding intonation group; it begins with the longest compound noun thus far (*ticket takers*) and closing with a group of three different accented items (*cash and checks and credit cards*). This final group projects echoes up and down the poem. It continues the pattern so far established of ending all lines with unaccented syllables, but also echoes both the syllable count and the accentual distribution of the group immediately above it:

... hIghways, /
... car rows in the pArking lot /
... cash and checks & crEdit cards, /

These connections are formally valuable in more than an abstract way. They are significant in establishing the ambivalence which the poem seems

to express towards the ceremony and its attenders, an ambivalence whose less positive side is directed towards the phenomena which these line-terminal, accentually similar groups pick out. Moreover, the sense of rhythmic progression which has been noted in these lines is reflected in the semantics of this vertical structure: each group denotes a phenomenon more damaging than the one above it. *Highways* can be interpreted positively - they can lead to interesting places - but when they lead only to *car rows in the parking lot*, there is not much good to be said for them; and what are the accoutrements of modern commerce doing in l. 3? Why is a fee apparently being charged for entrance to a cremation service? The poem does not explain, but succeeding line-terminal groups, which continue to embody slight variations on a three-accent, feminine pattern, disclose further potential anomalies:

...chIldren in red drEsses, /
...blue & yellow flAgs– /
... guards in khaki Uniforms /

That children wear red dresses - the colour of the robes worn by Tibetan monks - and that flags are displayed are not facts in themselves likely to be found uncomfortable; the presence of the guards in their military garb, on the other hand, is a much less friendly one. The vertical links signalled by accent cause the guards to reflect a note of compulsion upwards over preceding lines: is it good to clothe children in uniform dress? are the 'Flags' celebratory, or territorial? The line which follows seems to move from ambivalence to outright distaste, in a culminatory cluster of five accents:

/ i noticed crOwds, / noticed misty skIEs, / noticed the all-pervading smiles
& empty Eyes– /

The suggestion that followers of non-Western religions have 'empty eyes' is not a particularly new one, but gains considerable power from its formal context, both horizontal - the rhymes and alliterations of *misty skies / smiles / eyes* - and vertical, in its positioning at the foot of the series of comparably troubling phenomena noted so far. By such formal means, the poem creates an obstacle to its own drive forward, as, in an apparently unconnected series of observed phenomena, themes recur, and doubts coalesce.

These doubts, it may be thought, reflect some of the contradictions that result from Ginsberg's intellectual eclecticism, as Buddhist belief and culture confronts an essentially Western Romantic individualism. To a reader familiar with Ginsberg's difficult relationship with Chögyam Trungpa, they have a further resonance.[22] Yet they by no means dominate the poem: the overall movement and tone of 'On the Cremation...' are those of a voice that is encouraged by what has been observed, and places great value upon it. Given this fact, it seems to me that the rhythmic structure just described achieves a remarkable success, since within the poem's generally positive account of this Buddhist cremation, those aspects which the observer finds awkward are nonetheless given structural weight. Although the overall mood of the poem is not significantly disrupted by the relatively minor number of problematic phenomena, the patterning devices used ensure that these phenomena, too, are 'noticed', and made noticeable to readers and listeners in turn.

---

[22]Chögyam Trungpa (1939-87), Tibetan-born, became Ginsberg's instructor in Buddhism in 1971, and was the founder of the Naropa Institute at which Ginsberg taught. For an account of their relationship, see Michael Shumacher, *Dharma Lion: A Critical Biography of Allen Ginsberg* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 549-649. Tom Clark, *The Great Naropa Poetry Wars* (Santa Barbara: Cadmus, 1980), describes a particularly controversial incident involving Trungpa, and Ginsberg's reactions; Breslin, pp. 39-40, also comments.

A contrasting illustration of both the formal and the thematic use of accent within the long-lined poems of *Cosmopolitan Greetings* can be found in 'Big Eats', a much shorter poem:

> Big deal bargains TV meat stock market news paper headlines love life
> Metropolis
> Float thru air like thought forms float thru the skull, check the headlines
> catch the boyish ass that walks
> Before you fall in bed blood sugar high blood pressure lower, lower,
> your lips grow cold
> Sooner or later let go what you loved hated or shrugged off, you walk in
> the park
> You look at the sky, sit on a pillow, count up the stars in your head, get
> up and eat.
>
> *August 20, 1991*[23]

Here, the accents do not seem to create significant vertical patterns; rather, the horizontal progress of the poem through the accents of each line is made difficult, and this difficulty assumes an expressive function. As with 'On the Cremation', the poem's imagery is characteristically drawn from the details of Ginsberg's own life - such as l. 3's apparent reference to his diabetes - and from Buddhist practice, as in the allusions to meditation techniques in ll. 2 and 6. As with that poem, however, if my own experience is representative, the reader need not be versed in Buddhism for the poem to achieve its effect.

Ginsberg describes 'Big Eats' in an endnote as a:

> Mahamudra poetics exercise [...] The first of five verses, 21 syllables each, begins in "neurotic confusion" (Samsara), the last concludes grounded in "ordinary mind" (Dharmakaya).[24]

That the poem is written in syllabics is, as is often the case, not likely to be immediately clear to readers; the precise meaning of the Buddhist terms

---

[23]*Cosmopolitan Greetings*, p. 69.
[24]*Cosmopolitan Greetings*, p. 112.

used is likely to be known by a relatively small percentage among them.[25] However, the transition away from confusion that Ginsberg describes is, I think, made extremely clear by the poem's formal development.

The first line is packed with accentable items: there are no prepositions, no pronouns, no verbs - the word classes which, as Chapter 5 discussed, may readily be deaccented. Instead, it is made up of adjectives and nouns, corresponding to phenomena which, as l. 2 states. 'float thru air like thought forms float thru the skull'. Some of these adjectives and nouns may combine to make compound nouns, which are the only likely source of unaccented syllables beyond the line's relatively few polysyllables (8 of 13 words in l. 1 are of a single syllable). Yet how, and even whether these compound nouns are to be formed is rendered extremely problematic by the lack of a clear syntactic framework, and by the looseness of narrative structure described by l. 2. Is it:

/ big d**EA**l / b**A**rgains /

- that is, bargains about which the sardonic comment *big deal!* is being made, or

/ big deal b**A**rgains /

- bargains which constitute a big, or good, deal? Is it:

/ t**V** / m**EA**t /

that is, an account of two separate phenomena, or:

---

[25]*Mahamudra* is defined by Charles S. Prebish's *Historical Dictionary of Buddhism* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1993) as 'one of the highest teachings' of Vajrayana Buddhism, and a 'meditational system [which] first involves the cultivation of calming [...], eventually developing insight [...], finally coming to the direct experience of emptiness and luminosity' (p. 176). *Samsara* refers to 'the cycle of perpetual existence', characterised as 'filled with suffering' (p. 230); *Dharmakaya* to 'ultimate reality' and 'the true nature of Buddhahood' - the final state of spiritual development (p. 111).

/ &v mEAt /

- a single, rather apocalyptic compound? Or should 'meat' instead be associated with subsequent items? Again, if so - which?

/ mEAt stock / mArket news /
/ mEAt / stock market nEws /
/ mEAt / stOck market / nEws paper /
/ news paper hEAdlines /
/ nEws / paper hEAdlines /
/ lOve / lIfe /
/ lOve life /
/ love lIfe /

Naturally, the performer can come down in favour of one or another of these interpretations, and read the line accordingly. However, faced with such a systematic derangement of structure, the reader who did this might be thought to ignore the full intonational possibilities which it provides. Some sense of stumbling is strongly indicated, or a performance which allows for every possible interpretation, and conveys the embarrassment of choices available:

/ bIg / dEAl / bArgains / tV / mEAt / stOck / mArket / nEws / pAper /
hEAdlines / lOve / lIfe / metrOpolis /

By giving each item its own intonation group, and consequently its own nucleus, such a reading allows any syntactic connection, forward or back, to be made; at the same time, the reader may still suggest certain preferences by manipulating pause, termination and tonal movement.

Either reading will be awkward, yet functionally so, as the poem's development away from this peak of accent density and syntactic doubt shows. For l. 2 is much simpler, as the poem pulls back from the phenomenal multiplicity of l. 1 to supply its descriptive and narrative framework: it is syntactically straightforward, and includes nonaccentable function words such as *thru*, *like*, *the*, *that*. Line 3 recomplicates matters,

but momentarily; it is possible to misconstrue the sequence *blood sugar high blood pressure lower*, and a performer who has arrived at the interpretation / *blood sugar hIgh* / *blood pressure lOwer* / will remain able to convey something of that hesitation, yet this interpretation is likely nonetheless to be easily understood. At the risk of overstating readers' and listeners' readiness to interpret intonation semantically, it might be said that the accentual density here helps to convey something of the impact of illness on daily life, while the momentary doubts as to accent placement suggest a healthy level of anxiety about its importance: worrying, but perhaps less disastrous than the spiritual confusion evoked in l. 1. The closing lines, ll. 4-5, relax into a wider dispersal of accents and intonation groups, and into a syntax which leaves increasingly little room for doubt about their placement; the presence of punctuation in l. 5, for the first time in the poem, underlines the intonational ease which results from this double attainment. Fittingly, the line describes a state in which simple and necessary actions have once more become possible:

> You look at the sky, sit on a pillow, count up the stars in your head, get up and eat.[26]

The long-line poems, then, make use of techniques which create patterns across lines, and movement and textures within them. These are qualities which, it has been suggested here, will emerge only in performance, and towards which the poetry guides its readers. They can be summarised as involving intonation groups and paratone at a high level of discourse structure, and pitch accent and stress at the lower; all of these devices can create forms that may be of aesthetic or semantic significance.

---

[26]In imagery as well as technique, this closing line seems to recall that of Whitman's 'When I Heard The Learn'd Astronomer', in the analysis by Paul Fussell described in Chapter 1.

2 THE SHORT LINE

The shorter-lined poems of *Cosmopolitan Greetings* do not make use of all of the techniques found in the long-lined work. They avoid wholesale lexical anaphora, for example, and thereby forego its potential use as a cue to paratoning. This avoidance of the technique most characteristic of the long-lined work may be thought to be connected to the fact that in thematic terms these poems tend away from the prophetic catalogue, and towards a more personal, reflective tone: the shift in mood is thus reflected in a change of formal approach. The two moods or tones remain inextricably linked in Ginsberg's poetics, however - a point which appears to be made, with some humour, by the poem 'Proclamation':

> I am the King of the Universe
> I am the Messiah with a new dispensation
> Excuse me I stepped on a nail.
> A mistake
> Perhaps I am not the Capitalist of Heaven
> Perhaps I'm a gate keeper snoring
> beside the Pearl Columns–
> No this isn't true, I really am God himself.
> Not at all human. Don't associate me
> w/that Crowd.
> In any case you can believe every word
> I say.
>
> *October 31, 1987*
> *Gas Station, N.Y.*[27]

In this poem, the anaphoric technique is associated, in ll. 1-2, with the bardic mode, and the humour of l. 3 stems in part from the bathetic abandonment of both; an abandonment which cannot be total, Ginsberg being Ginsberg, and in this poem very self-consciously so. The repetition of *Perhaps* - a relapse into anaphora - and the undecidability of the degree of irony to be read into the poet's self-proclaimed apotheosis make this very clear.

---

[27]*Cosmopolitan Greetings*, p. 29.

If the short-lined poems do not abandon the hortatory mood altogether, then, neither do they relinquish all potential cues to paratone as a means of structuring discourse. This is the case of 'Spot Anger', for example, which begins with a simple statement:

> Allen when you get angry you got two choices –

and then precedes through a series of suggested courses of action, all expressed as imperatives:

> Konk your head[...]
> Bang[...] slap [...]
> insult [...]
> Snarl [...] sneer [...]
> Why not more subtle, grab your anger by the wings
> and bag it in the garbage pail
> Look around [...]
> [...]
> Say, [...]
> [...]
> Breathe, [...] exhale[...]
> [...]
> [...] & fly off [...] .[28]

If the reader is alert to them, these imperatives may be used as co-ordinating points in a series of minor paratones of differing lengths; this will constitute a case of intonational cueing being effected by grammatical rather than lexical anaphora.[29] However, such grammatical cues are less visible than comparable lexical ones, and require more attentiveness of the reader if they are to function successfully. In general, they are much rarer within the short-lined poems than are the line-initial lexical repetitions within the long-lined work.

Most frequently, therefore, the formal work of the short-lined poetry is as aural as that of the long-lined and metrical pieces, but is carried out to a

---

[28]*Cosmopolitan Greetings*, p. 9.
[29]A similar pattern of imperatives is noted in Whitman's 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry' by Gay Wilson Allen (Allen, p. 232).

very great extent by syllabic prominences alone. This is achieved by two main kinds of patterning: at the level of the line, via repeated prominence counts, and below that level, via links between related local patterns.

These local links operate in ways similar to those described above, in 'On The Cremation of Chögyam Trungpa, Vidyadhara'. However, they function as the principal patterning device much less frequently in the short-lined poems than in the longer-lined ones, perhaps for the simple reason that the brevity of the typical line will tend to cause any perception of pattern within it to be associated with the line as a whole. There are, in other words, simply too few syllables available for the performer to produce the pattern whereby a series of varying intonation groups are followed by one which remains constant across lines. As a result, the patterning of prominences within these poems occurs at the level of the line; where local links are also apparent, they tend to form part of this wider accentual scheme, and may also be reinforced by means of other phonetic parallels.

These characteristics are embodied by the poem 'Who Eats Who?':

A crow sits on the prayerflagpole,
her mate blackwinged walks the wet green grass, worms?
Yesterday seagulls skimmed the choppy waves,
        feet touching foamed breakers
                looking for salmon? halibut? sole?
Bacteria eat parameciums or vice versa,
viruses enter cells, white cell count low–
Tooth & claw on TV, lions strike down antelopes–
Whales sift transparent krill thru bearded teeth.
Every cannibal niche fulfilled, Amazon
        headhunters eat testicles–
                Enemy's powers and energy become mine!

August 13, 1992
Gampo Abbey, Nova Scotia[30]

---

[30]*Cosmopolitan Greetings*, p. 95.

This is a poem whose catalogue of reference points is typical of *Cosmopolitan Greetings* in its variety. The thematic continuities between them naturally contribute to the poem's coherence, yet what is also striking is the way in which, line by line, phonetic patterning links the different passages together. This patterning is occasionally intonational - as in the rising contours likely to be cued by the question mark which closes l. 1, and the three further questions that close l. 4 - and is frequently aided by assonance and alliteration; the most noticeable parallelisms, however, are those between patterns of prominent and unprominent syllables, at, and to a lesser extent below, the level of the line.

Many of the lines contain a prominence distribution that is very likely to induce the inference of beats:

/ a crow sits on the prAyerfl▲gpole /
o B ô B ŏ B o B o

[...]

/ yEsterday / seagulls skimmed the choppy wAves /
B ŏ B o B o B o B
feet touching foamed brEAkers /
B ôB o B ô B

Some lines may be metrical, provided the speaker distributes prominences appropriately:

/ whAles / sift transparent krIll / thru bearded tEEth
B ŏ B o B o B o B

Others seem unlikely to be metrical:

/ her mAte / blackwInged / walks the wet green grAss / wOrms? /

There is a mixture of metrical and nonmetrical lines in this poem; the metrical lines vary between four-beat, five-beat and (in l. 8) six-beat patterns. Reader and listener will try a series of metrical hypotheses, some of which will prove adequate for several lines, some for one or none.

In consequence, the rhythms of this poem are likely to elicit two responses. One is a slight disorientation, as metrical and nonmetrical lines alternate. The other, however, is the belief that accent, rather than beat distribution, is the poem's constant; vertical connections may be made between lines containing a similar number of accents. Helping these patterns to give shape to the poem is the end-stopped nature of all lines, even the steps of the step-down triad; each is perceived as a discrete rhythmic unit. Thus, in the opening description of flagpole and sea, lines 1, 4 and 5 contain four accents apiece, while the intervening ll. 2 and 3, which describe the mind's turn from today's to yesterday's birds; are likely to contain 5 accents. Lines 6, 7 and 9 return to this 5-accent pattern, which in its turn is prevented from creating the expectation of a single, dominant metre by a longer intervening line - the 6-beat l. 8.[31] As 4-accent is interrupted by 5-accent, and 5-accent by 6-accent, the effect is created of a shift in the figure-ground relationship, since the 5-accented line has moved from interloper (in ll. 2-3) to norm (in ll. 6, 7 and 9). These shifts within a limited range of possible accentual patterns contribute significantly to the overall effect of the poem.

They also bear rhetorical fruit in the lines which follow:

/ Every cannibal niche fulfilled, amazon
hEAdhunters / eat tEsticles– /

The reference to Amazon head-hunters takes the poem from the animal world to the sphere of human appetite, and prepares the ground for the poem's closing expression (perhaps a little bathetic) of individual defiance.[32] The transition is reinforced by the straddling of 'Amazon

---

[31]Each step in the triad is here considered for numbering purposes as a new line.

[32]The suggestion that these appetites are spiritual as well as physical - 'energies and powers', as the last line has it - is equally anticipated by this line's use of *fulfilled* in a context where *filled* might seem more appropriate.

headhunters' over the poem's sole enjambment, which is visually perceivable to the reader and which, given its uniqueness in the poem, is likely to be brought out intonationally in performance. The dramatic effect of the enjambment is almost certainly enhanced by its occurring at the end of a 5-accent line, since the establishment in the preceding lines of this pattern's status as temporary norm makes the exceptional push of the enjambment all the more noticeable.[33]

Below the level of the line, the poem makes use, like 'On the Cremation...', of the accentual realisation of line-terminal words, bolstered by alliteration and assonance: thus *worms / waves, sole / low / antelopes, antelopes / Amazon / testicles*. However, as suggested above, in many cases these linked local patterns reinforce and are absorbed into the quasi-metrical structure seen at the level of the line. So, ll. 1 and 4, both four-accented, both also have feminine endings, which the 5-accented ll. 2 and 3 do not, while l. 5 brings the two patterns together by ending with a word that is masculine in accentual structure - *sole* - but that rhymes with the last word of l. 1, *prayerflagpole*, which is feminine. Indeed, *sole?* is anticipated not only by *prayerflagpole*, but also alliteratively - in the *s* of *salmon* and the *l* of *halibut* - and intonationally - in the interrogative *worms?* of l. 2. It will not be surprising if the reader chooses, as a result, to apply extra interpretative attention to the word, hearing it as a play on *soul*; such a realisation of the possible pun will strengthen the links which the poem seeks to suggest between physical and spiritual nourishment.

'Who Eats Who?' is not exceptional within *Cosmopolitan Greetings* in the effectiveness of its hovering over metre. Similar patterns may be found in another poem, 'Personals Ad', whose variations in accentual pattern are

---

[33]Justus Lawler describes the 'overflowing [...] of one person or reality into another' across a linebreak as the 'enjambment of transcendence': *Celestial Pantomime: Poetic Structures of Transcendence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 84.

used to lovely effect. The poem begins with four lines which seem to suggest a 4-beat metre, but this proves to be merely a point of departure:

> Poet professor in autumn years
> seeks helpmate companion protector friend
> young lover w/empty compassionate soul
> exuberant spirit, straightforward handsome
> athletic physique and boundless mind, courageous
> warrior who may also like women and girls, no problem,
> to share bed meditation apartment Lower East Side,
> help inspire mankind conquer world anger and guilt,
> empowered by Whitman Blake Rimbaud Ma Rainey & Vivaldi,
> familiar respecting Art's primordial majesty, priapic carefree
> playful harmless slave or master, mortally tender passing swift time,
> photographer, musician, painter, poet, yuppie or scholar–
> Find me here in New York alone with the Alone
> going to lady psychiatrist who says Make time in your life
> for someone you can call darling, honey, who holds you dear
> can get excited and lay his head on your heart in peace.
>
> *October 8, 1987*[34]

I perform this as follows: in the left hand column of the table are noted, for subsequent reference, the number of accents performed per line, broken down to correspond to the different intonation groups where more than one is present:

4	/ poet professor in **au**tumn y**EA**rs /
4	seeks h**e**lpmate comp**a**nion prot**e**ctor fr**IE**nd /
4	young l**o**ver w[ith] **e**mpty comp**a**ssionate s**OU**l /
2+2	ex**u**berant sp**Ir**it, / str**ai**ghtforward h**A**ndsome /
4+1	athl**e**tic phys**i**que and b**ou**ndless m**I**nd, / cour**a**geous
4+1	w**A**rrior who may **a**lso like w**o**men and g**ir**ls, / no pr**O**blem, /
5	to share b**e**d medit**a**tion apartment l**o**wer east s**I**de, /
5	help inspire mank**i**nd conquer w**o**rld **a**nger and g**UI**lt, /
6	emp**o**wered by wh**i**tman blake rimb**au**d ma r**ai**ney & viv**A**ldi, /
5+2	fam**i**liar resp**e**cting **a**rt's prim**o**rdial m**A**jesty, / pr**i**apic c**A**refree /
4+4	pl**a**yful h**a**rmless sl**a**ve or m**A**ster / m**o**rtally t**e**nder p**a**ssing swift t**I**me, /
1+1+1+1+2	phot**O**grapher, / mus**I**cian, / p**AI**nter, / p**O**et, / y**u**ppie or sch**O**lar– /
5	f**i**nd me h**e**re in new y**o**rk al**o**ne with the al**O**ne /
5	going to l**a**dy psych**i**atrist who s**a**ys make t**I**me in your l**i**fe /
3+1+1	for s**o**meone you can call d**A**rling, / h**O**ney, / who h**O**lds you / d**EA**r /
5	can get exc**i**ted and l**a**y his h**ea**d on your h**ea**rt in p**EA**ce. /

---

[34]*Cosmopolitan Greetings*, p. 28.

As the left-hand column illustrates, the sequence of accents-per-line in this poem, so performed, is far from random. It moves from an initial four-beat quatrain, through two lines in which an intonation group containing four accents is followed by a group containing just one, then through two more lines containing five accents, this time in a single intonation group, before arriving, in l. 9, at the accentual 'peak' of a line containing six accents in a single group:

/ empowered by whitman blake rimbaud ma rainey & vivAldi, /

From here, the poem passes through three intonationally complex lines containing 7, 8 and again 6 accents, before 'shrinking' accentually to close, as it began, with a four-line group: this time not of four-beat, but of lines which resemble iambic pentameter. This overall movement of expansion followed by contraction, and the parallels from line to line within it, give a strong and satisfying sense of shape to the poem as read aloud.

The form of 'Personals Ad' may also accomplish local semantic tasks. One example of this lies in the contrast between the four four-accented lines which open the poem, and which are likely to be experienced as metrical, and the four loose pentameters which close it. The transition from four-beat to pentameter forms contributes a great deal to the wry, wistful note on which the poem closes, for, while four-beat patterns combine well into stanzaic groups - notably the 4x4 stanza - iambic pentameter is a much less gregarious form. This is not a question of generic coding so much as of phonetic and cognitive fact: as noted in Chapter 3, groups of four beats, at least in the Western musical tradition, naturally combine with each other to form accretive rhythmic structures. The bonhomous bounce of ll. 1-4 thus derives to a significant extent from

its approximation to a 4x4 stanza.[35] 5-beat forms, on the other hand, are cognitively extremely awkward in this respect.[36] In poetry, this can be overcome by devices, such as a regular internal structure and end-rhyme, which encourage the reader to adopt an unchanging rhythmic framework within which to combine the lines; no reader finds Pope's couplets rhythmically awkward. In the absence of these, however, the lines may tend somewhat to stand alone within rhythmic structure: are they to be read as an overshot four-beat, as an undershot six-beat, or as a structure whose formal logic is not beat-based at all? The pentameters which close 'Personals Ad' are both blank and irregular: extra syllables are frequent, and the penultimate line is broken into several intonation groups. The reader is therefore encouraged to treat each line as a discrete rhythmic unit. This, in conjunction with the scene of analysis depicted, contributes much to the sense of solitude which is explicitly evoked in l. 13, but which may be found to pervade these lines in ways beyond the lexical.

An important technical device of earlier lines seems to be the association of expressions of self-confidence with a likely exact coincidence of line and intonation group. The first three lines observe such a coincidence; the fourth does not, and thereby suggests an incipient loss of *élan* on the speaker's part. Most effective in this respect are the 'hanging' intonation groups at the end of ll. 5 and 6, both of which are given, by virtue of their position, the character of afterthought or concession. The speaker seems to accept that he is not an easy proposition (needing a lover who is 'courageous') and is willing to accept that his lover may also have desire for others ('no problem'). There is nothing inherently abashed in either of these statements, yet the fact that each is placed in an intonation

---

[35]As well, of course, as from its lexical and syntactic content. Metre cannot create such effects alone.
[36]*REP*, p. 133.

group that is not only isolated from the main body of the line, but in each case marks a break from the four-beat norm that prevails at this point, gives them a note of apology. Quite a different mood is conveyed by the lines which follow, in which the poet recounts his tastes and ambitions, and in which line and intonation group are coterminous; there is little self-doubt here. Line 9, as suggested, forms a peak of some sort within the poem, where the poet is on the surest ground of all, recounting his poetic and musical tastes and allegiances. These, the reader is likely to feel, are found sufficiently inspiring that the intonation group which contains them is not only the most accent-filled of the poem, but can sustain the articulation of these accents over a full line.[37]

In comparison with paratone, accent might be called a less risky formal strategy: the poems of *Cosmopolitan Greeting* will always be uttered with accents, even if the patterns into which they fall may vary. Furthermore, as was shown in the previous section, the density of accents which readings of *Cosmopolitan Greetings* are likely to contain will serve to focus the reader's and listener's attention towards the occasions when they are used as a formal device. In the short-lined poems, the reader is further encouraged to attend to accent by some delicate local effects. One is to be found in the penultimate line of 'Personals Ad', quoted above:

> for someone you can call darling, honey, who holds you dear

---

[37]The link between expressions of cultural allegiance - be it to Ma Rainey or any other figure - and the construction of a sociable self seems to be particularly visible in the personals ad, at least in publications with a high proportion of readers educated in such a way that such references form a currency. References to the advertiser's tastes in music, cinema or another art form can be seen in even the briefest such advertisement - the *London Review of Books* is well known for this - a fact that suggests that Ginsberg's placing of the same device at the heart of 'Personals Ad', and as the aspect of his romantic appeal of which he appears to feel surest, is psychologically acute. See also Jonathan Williams's 1968 poem based on the same conceit, 'Classified Advertisement', which begins 'Gay guy, internationally unknown poet...', and whose appeal for respondents consists almost entirely in an eclectic list of Williams's cultural heroes. *The Loco Logodaedalist In Situ: Selected Poems 1968-70* (London: Cape Goliard, 1971), n.p.

There is a lovely ambivalence in this: is the 'lady psychiatrist' encouraging the poet to dwell in an imagined future by reiterating the terms of affection he will use there - 'darling, honey' - or, more prosaically, is she herself calling the poet 'honey'? Likewise, the punctuation suggests that the poet needs someone to 'hold him dear'; but also available is the Alan Bennettish 'You need someone to hold you, dear'. A performance which preserves the possibility of both readings, by accenting copiously and finessing the intonation, will preserve something of the difference which separates the advice and comfortable affection which the speaker can get from his psychiatrist, and the passion in search of which he is placing his advertisement. Another example of the rewards of accenting more frequently - and deliberately - than may be usual is provided by the opening lines of 'Nanao':

> Brain washed by numerous mountain streams
> Legs clean after walking four continents
> Eyes cloudless as Kagoshima sky[38]

The syntax of all three lines places an adjective phrase after the noun which it describes; intonationally, this suggests a group boundary after the noun, and an accent on either side of it:

> / br**AI**n / w**a**shed by n**u**merous m**ou**ntain str**EA**ms /

The difference between *brain washed* and *brainwashed* is most clearly conveyed by the accent on *washed*; if the reader has lingered on the word sufficiently carefully that the right reading results, s/he will gain the flattering pleasure of engagement with, and successful negotiation of, a pun.

---

[38]*Cosmopolitan Greetings*, p. 27.

Such cues and rewards continually encourage the reader of *Cosmopolitan Greetings* to adopt a style of performance in which a large proportion of accentable syllables **is** accented. Such a style does not demand quite the degree of engagement with the broader pragmatics of the text - of 'direct orientation' - that is necessary for paratone to function within poetic form. Nonetheless, it does make certain demands of the reader, which may, in the absence of the kind of formal rewards just described, prove just as problematic.

One of the principal motivations for accent discussed in Chapter 3 was *focus*: the accented syllable will be that which has lexical stress within the item or domain that most interests the speaker. If the reader is to accent repeatedly, this interest must be rapidly and frequently renewed. The implications of this are made clear by Ginsberg's own discussion of Ezra Pound, and, in particular, of Pound's recording, in 1968, of Canto XX, including the line 'with usura the line grows thick':

> Now this way is accentual:
>
> du du / da / du du da du da
>
> with usúra, the líne grows thíck
>
> But Pound doesn't say it that way. Pound speaks it, "with usura the line . . . grows . . . thick."
>
> Because he wasn't saying *the line gets thick* - he wasn't saying *gets* - he meant *grows* thick, historically, with usura, over a century - will grow, *thicken* the line. So (slower, ponderous):
>
> with usura, the line . . . grows . . . thick . . .
>
> with usura is no . . . clear . . . demarcation
>
> So in other words, every syllable is intentional. And if it ain't intentional, then it doesn't belong. If it's a filler, then throw it out. From that formulation of Basil Bunting's, Dichten = condensare: to condense. So condense everything down to what you *mean* to say. If you condense it all down to what you mean to say, then you can make a music out of the intentional and significant...syllables. And you can *pay attention to the tone-leading of the vowels*. See? It's not pay-attention-to-the-tone, but you can pay attention because EACH THING ... MEANS ... SOME ... THING. And that gives [...] a density to the line.[39]

The accent-based forms of *Cosmopolitan Greetings* recall that perception of Ginsberg's. However, the association of accent with interest raises the

---

[39]'Improvised Poetics', pp. 32-33.

question of the experience of a reader who does not find a form emerging from the accents which he or she is uttering. This is likely to depend entirely on the interest of the poem's propositional content - in its *pre*-performance meaning. As Ginsberg says, the accent-heavy performance style assumes that 'EACH THING MEANS SOMETHING'; if the reader finds that, in a given poem, each thing does *not* mean something - or at least, something worth getting excited about to the degree implied by an accent-rich style - the result is likely to be one of some frustration. Form that depends on accent alone is thus not only vulnerable to weakness in the content of the poem, but can actually exacerbate the reader's disappointment in that weakness.

3 CONCLUSION

This account of the forms of *Cosmopolitan Greetings* is limited in scope; only a small proportion of the collection's poems have been discussed. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the repertoire of features described is representative, or at least suggestive, of the collection as a whole. The use of phonetics has permitted the discounting of the theory that the breath-unit is an adequate formal explanation of Ginsberg's long-lined work; within the speech and thought processes associated with speaking - and even more so within listening - the taking of a breath is of relatively minor significance. The intonational feature that has been suggested as an alternative - the minor paratone - depends, for its precise realisation, on the discretion of the reader. Nonetheless, it is a meaningful phonetic and phonological unit, and may help to account for some of the formal power of the Ginsbergian long line. The accentual features described are less unusual, being based in syllabic prominence, and in particular the pitch accent. However, the variety of uses to which Ginsberg's poetry

encourages accent to be put may be more so - grouped, they create rhythmic motifs within lines, and achieve vertical connections between lines; individually, they can achieve delicate local effects.

It is clear that the forms found depend in part on the functions found for them, and vice versa. One of the criticisms that could be made of the preceding sections is that their account of form seems principally geared towards semantic effects: as I have described them, the linking of groups of accents in 'On the Cremation of Chögyam Trungpa, Vidyadhara', and the shifting allusions to metre in 'Who Eats Who?', serve above all to reinforce and nuance the propositional content of the poems. This may be the result of the difficulty of describing the more abstract aspects of poetic form; it may be that my own methods and preferences are a limiting factor.

However, at least part of the explanation seems to lie with the poetry itself, and with the very close link between form and content which it fosters. The resources of accent and intonation described in this chapter have two principal tasks. On the one hand, they can pattern chunks of discourse in ways which maintain the listener's interest in the vertical structuring of the speech stream, and can be perceived to form an abstract pattern; these are the formal tasks identified above. However, at the same time as they are creating such a pattern, both paratones and accents are heightening the immediate affective impact of the propositional content of the text. This has two main risks. On the one hand, as described in the preceding sections, the reader may refuse the degree of engagement necessary for these forms to function; on the other, his or her attention, and that of any listener, may be so concentrated on the content thus heightened that the forms which the heightening devices have created go unnoticed. This close alignment of form and meaning can create, in texts such as 'Personals Ad', a rich and rewarding poetry; the risks that this alignment

entails may help to explain the fact that the forms used are so rarely commented upon.

Chapter 7
Jack Kerouac's *Mexico City Blues*: A Score for Intonation?

Mexico City Blues, a volume of poems written by Jack Kerouac in Mexico City in the summer of 1955, was published in New York in 1959, two years after the success of *On the Road*.[1] Reviews were mixed. A particularly hostile account came from the poet Kenneth Rexroth, who found the collection's use of Buddhist themes to be ignorant, while more sympathetic comment came from Anthony Hecht, who praised the 'voice of a man' which could be discerned within the poems, and from Robert Creeley.[2] Since these initial reviews, however, the volume has received comparatively little critical comment. Described by one biographer as 'a book of daydreams, gentle [...] marijuana and morphine fantasies', its loosely-shaped introspections, including meditations on jazz, Buddhism and Christianity, can make for awkward reading, while critical attention has been more concerned with Kerouac's novels, and with his life.[3]

The first, and so far only study of *Mexico City Blues* was published in 1992.[4] Its author, James T. Jones, makes a case for the value of what he

---

[1]Jack Kerouac, *Mexico City Blues* (New York: Grove Press, 1959; repr. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990).

[2]Kenneth Rexroth, 'Discordant and Cool', *New York Times Book Review*, 29 November 1959, p. 14; Anthony Hecht. 'The Anguish of the Spirit and the Letter', *Hudson Review*, 12 (1959-60), 593-603 (pp. 601-03); Robert Creeley, 'Ways of Looking', *Poetry*, 98 (1961), 192-98 (pp. 195-96).

[3]Ann Charters, *Kerouac: A Biography* (London: André Deutsch, 1974), p. 203. Charters's is one of at least four book-length biographies to have been published. The only one to engage in detail with the poetry of *Mexico City Blues* is Gerald Nicosia's *Memory Babe: A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac* (New York: Grove Press, 1983), pp. 480-90.

[4]James T. Jones, *A Map of Mexico City Blues: Jack Kerouac as Poet* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992).

calls 'a neglected major work'.[5] His approach is both thematic - with chapters discussing the roles of Mexico, of Buddhism, and of blues music - and formal. He pays particular attention to aspects of Kerouac's use of sound, as is appropriate for a work whose statement of intent is avowedly musical:

> I want to be considered a jazz poet blowing a long blues in an afternoon jam session on Sunday. I take 242 choruses [...][6]

Central to Jones's account is the assertion that the listener to *Mexico City Blues* 'finds [...] the orality of speech replicated on the page'.[7] For example, Jones argues that the letter 'o' functions as a recurrent motif in the poems, linking texts phonetically, and symbolising the Spanish-language culture of Mexico.[8] From a prosodic point of view, however, his comments are more limited.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine whether rhythm and intonation have a role to play in the form of *Mexico City Blues*. In this respect, it has a similar goal and method to Chapters 5 and 6. However, there are two important differences.

The first lies in a particular concentration on intonation. An informal reading of *Mexico City Blues* had suggested that it contained several poems in which the reader's use of intonation seemed both to be manipulated by the text, and to have interesting formal consequences. It was this sense of its intonational potential that suggested the volume for discussion in this chapter. Support for such an angle of approach comes from the repeated insistence by Kerouac's associates and admirers on the importance of

---

[5]Jones, p. 2.
[6]'Note', in *Mexico City Blues*, n.p.
[7]Jones, p. 167.
[8]Jones, pp. 69-75.

intonation to his poetry. Allen Ginsberg, for example, noted in 1971 that Kerouac was:

> the first writer I ever met who heard his own writing, who listened to his own sentences as if they were musical, rhythmical constructions [...] [He] got to be a great poet on that basis, 'cause he could hear American speech, and he could hear it in musical sequence.[9]

In conversation in 1978, he associated this aspect of Kerouac's poetry with intonation:

> So the key in American poetry that I got from Kerouac [...] was this pronunciation of the *tones* of key words in sentences. That comes somewhat from the exaggerated style of barroom conversation among newspaper reporters. [...] "Well, *you say* you heard that, but I don't believe that." "*You say* you saw that guy murder that guy I don't believe it." "*You say* you're innocent but I don't believe it." So you get a da-DA-da-da-da. So that actually provides a set of vocal tones which can be applied to emphasize the meaning of any sentence.[10]

The perception that intonation may play a significant part in Kerouac's poetry is widely shared. Both Jones and Nicosia mention the importance of pitch, while the recording made of Ginsberg's own reading of *Mexico City Blues* is marketed, in part, on the basis that Ginsberg 'was a close friend, student and companion of Jack Kerouac, and familiar with Kerouac's own vocal intonations'.[11] The precise nature and function of these intonations, however, has never been explored.[12]

---

[9]Allen Ginsberg, 'Kerouac', in *Allen Verbatim: Lectures on Poetry, Politics, Consciousness*, ed. by Gordon Ball (New York: McGraw Hill, 1974), pp. 151-60 (p. 152). Lecture delivered at Kent State University, April 6, 1971.

[10]'Andrei Voznesensky and Allen Ginsberg: A Conversation', in *Beat Writers At Work: The Paris Review*, ed. by George Plimpton (New York: Modern Library, 1999), pp. 157-80 (p. 169). Conversation held in December 1978.

[11]Nicosia, p. 481; Jones, p. 167. Note on cover of Jack Kerouac. Mexico City Blues. Read by Allen Ginsberg. 2 cassettes. Shambala Lion Editions SLE29. 1996. It is possible, of course, that 'intonations' is here being used imprecisely, as a synonym of 'renditions'.

[12]Outside Nicosia, perhaps the most interesting account of Kerouac's poetic form comes in Salvatore Maiorana, *Un Sogno americano: dal jazz alla poesia Beat* (Palermo: Sintesi, 1980), pp. 20-23. Maiorana compares the structure of the 7th Chorus, and of the opening to Ginsberg's 'Howl', to that of a chorus by Charlie Parker. He notes that in both poems a passage whose function is 'informattiva-descrittiva' is followed by a longer passage of '«espansione» semantica' (p. 20), and identifies these with the 'break'

The second difference is that some discussion is included of recordings of the poet's own readings, and, in the case of one poem, of that by Ginsberg.[13] The suggestion that recordings might provide evidence of a poem's supposed canonical interpretation was discussed in Chapter 2, and ruled out of the methods to be used in this thesis. The authorial performance is not used in such a way in this chapter. However, the discussion of intonation in poetry is comparatively difficult, and risks paying an excess of attention to a single reader's performances - in this case, to my own. Recordings by other readers, especially when those readers may be thought sympathetic to the needs of the text, provide a form of context, or empirical support, to those put forward by criticism. Nonetheless, they must be used carefully if the discussion is to be genuinely text-based. The readings which I suggest in section 2 of this chapter were developed without reference to the recordings of either Kerouac or Ginsberg, except with regard to the choice of poems. I had heard Kerouac's readings only once, approximately eight months before beginning to write this chapter, and those of Ginsberg not at all.

In my readings, no attempt was made to predict those of Kerouac or Ginsberg; the tools described in Chapters 3 and 4 were used simply to ensure that my reactions reflected intonational patterns of behaviour that are widely shared. If intonation is to be considered a major contributor to poetic form, it is not essential that every performance choice be shared by an author and his readers; what matters is that readers sympathetic to the text, but in different circumstances, may within that text find cues that lead them to performances with a certain degree of similarity.

---

and the 'refrain' respectively of a Parker chorus. The analysis is very suggestive, but Maiorana does not develop it.

[13]Jack Kerouac and Steve Allen. Poetry for the Beat Generation. LP. Hanover 5000. 1959. Reissued in 1990 as part of The Kerouac Collection. 3 CDs. Rhino Records R2 70939.

Finally, the desire to use the recordings in this way has acted to limit the number of poems chosen for discussion. *Mexico City Blues* is a varied and variable collection, and one in which the poet's concern to create a form reproducible by his readers seems at times to have ceded before a willingness to rely, in determining the layout of the texts, on the page-boundaries of the notebook in which the poems were originally composed.[14] I wanted to discuss only those poems in which something other than this seemed to be at work - in which form, particularly aural form, seemed determined by the conditions of reception as well as by those of production. I also, however, wanted to be able to compare as many as possible of my performances to those of the author. The combination of these conditions left a very small sample of poems from which to choose, and to which the discussions which follow are therefore restricted. This has the advantage of permitting extended analysis in a relatively short discussion, but means that, while these readings may be representative of a small selection of poems, they cannot claim to constitute a thorough analysis of *Mexico City Blues* as a whole.

1 A READING OF THE POEMS

A) LINE AND INTONATION GROUP

i) The line as phonetic cue

An important component of any reading of nonmetrical poetry is the determining of the performative consequences of linebreak. In Chapter 4 it was shown that nonmetrical poetry could not rely on linebreak to cue phonetic phenomena such as pause or intonation-group boundary. Only

---

[14]Ted Berrigan, 'An Interview with Jack Kerouac', in Plimpton, pp. 97-133 (p. 104).

where other indicators are present, such as those of punctuation or syntax, is linebreak likely to have any sonic consequences.

In *Mexico City Blues*, such indicators are regularly present, with the majority of linebreaks being reinforced by syntax, semantics or punctuation. This can be seen in the following sample of extracts, selected purely on the grounds of numerical sequence - the opening three lines of the 1st, 11th, 21st, 31st, 41st and 51st Choruses:

Butte Magic of Ignorance
Butte Magic
Is the same as no-Butte (1st)

Brown wrote a book called
The White and the Black

N a r c o t i c C i t y (11th)

Not very musical, the Western ear
- No lyres in the pines
compare with the palms (21st)

Three Saints in Four Acts
by Gertrude Stein
A Great Prophet (31st)

That other part of your mind
Where everything's refined
To thin hare screamers (41st)

America is a permissible dream
Providing you remember ants
Have Americas and Russians (51st)[15]

The reader is likely to find that the most natural response to all 15 of these linebreaks includes the placing of an intonation-group boundary, and probably a pause. One reason for this is that almost all of the lines are coextensive with a clause or phrase. Syntactic boundaries constitute strong

[15]*Mexico City Blues*, pp. 1, 11, 21, 31, 41, 51.

inducements to intonation-group boundary, and when reinforced by the visual inducement of line-break are particularly persuasive:

/ Butte Magic of Ignorance /
Butte Magic /
Is the same as no-Butte /

/ Not very musical, / the Western ear /
- No lyres in the pines /
compare with the palms /

As shown by the second example, the interpretation of line-break as a cue to intonation-group boundary does not prevent boundaries being placed elsewhere in the line, where cues such as those of punctuation are present.

Some of the quoted linebreaks, however, do not fall on major syntactic boundaries. One example occurs in ll. 2-3 of the 51st Chorus, which needs to be quoted at slightly greater length if its syntax is to become clear:

America is a permissible dream
Providing you remember ants
Have Americas and Russians
Like the Possessed have Americas
And little Americas are had
By baby mules in misty fields

The major syntactic division in l. 2 is that before, not after, 'ants', since that word begins the relative clause which is the object of the verb 'remember'. This disalignment of linebreak and clausal division occurs again in l. 3. A similar case is that of ll. 1-2 of the 11th Chorus, in which the principal syntactic division falls before, not after 'called', the participle standing at the beginning of a reduced postmodifying clause: 'Brown wrote a book [which was] called *The White and the Black*'

Despite the fact that these linebreaks do not follow major syntactic boundaries, it seems likely that the reader may nonetheless treat them as cues to some form of interruption of the performance. Intonation has a strong probabilistic relation with syntax, but is not controlled by it: tempo,

attitude and discourse structure are among the influences that may cause the two to part company. In the 51st Chorus, it is clear that much expressiveness is gained by placing an intonation-group boundary after 'ants', and indeed after 'Russians'. In each case, the poem's quizzical engagement with American exceptionalism is reinforced by this lingering on the lowly or politically adversary beings to whom, the poem suggests, Americans would be wrong to feel superior:

> amErica / is a permissible drEAm /
> providing you remEmber / Ants /
> have amEricas / and rUssians /
> like the possEssed / have amEricas /

The lineation combines with the fact that noun-phrase subjects, such as these, are among the sub-clause items to which speakers most frequently assign intonation-group boundaries: the result feels intonationally unproblematic, and rhetorically very effective.[16] A further advantage may be the fleeting misconstruction of l. 2 that the lineation permits: remember ants!

In the 11th Chorus, on the other hand, the break after 'called' is unlikely to cause that word to be given its own intonation group; when a participle, it is rarely accented. Instead, the linebreak may cause the title 'The White and the Black' to be introduced by a pause:

> brown wrote a bOOk / called ...
> the white and the blAck /

This is easily done, and has the effect of making the participle 'called' function as a kind of intonational pivot, between two groups which are similar in accentual structure (onset + nucleus) and which share lexical and

---

[16]The intonational potential of noun-phrase subjects is repeatedly exploited in *Mexico City Blues* - as the five quoted extracts illustrate, they are frequently given a line to themselves.

phonetic elements. This poem has been interpreted as a self-parody in which Kerouac is 'Brown', 'a white man who wishes he were black', and where 'The White and the Black' alludes to Kerouac's first novel, *The Town and the City*, which had been influenced by Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le noir*.[17] The preceding pause will help bring to the title 'The White and the Black' the mock grandiloquence on which such a parody relies.

If the five quoted extracts are representative of other poems within *Mexico City Blues* - and the fact that they were selected purely on the grounds of their numbering is intended to increase this possibility - they suggest that the reader of this collection will be encouraged to treat linebreak as a cue to some form of intonational marker, since to do so, even in counterindication to the syntax, is enriching to the experience of the poem. This marker may be either an intonation-group boundary, or a simple pause, but in either case will serve to segment the performed poem into phonetically-defined units. This does not mean that linebreak in *Mexico City Blues* either will, or should, always be interpreted as an intonational cue: it would be unjustified to assume such a unity in either the collection on the one hand, or in the docility of readers on the other. Indeed, several of the poems discussed below illustrate the formal potential of the overriding of this cue for one or another reason. However, it is suggested that the intonational interpretation be regarded, in effect, as the default, and, where it is not observed, that this is in itself a formally interesting phenomenon.

Mexico City Blues, then, can be described as a collection in which the visual phenomenon of line has a strong relationship with the phonetic phenomenon of intonation group. The same is true of all metrical verse, but within a nonmetrical context the strength of this relationship, and the

---

[17]Nicosia, p. 481.

formal uses to which it is put, are more unusual. In the next section, this question is further explored, and illustrative examples from a range of poems within *Mexico City Blues* are discussed.

ii) Linebreak and intonation: formal effects

The formal consequences of the focus on intonation group are diffused throughout the collection. In poem after poem, lines function as cue to true aural building-blocks, the 'périodes discursives équipotentielles' which Tomachevski saw as central to poetic form.[18] This distinguishes *Mexico City Blues* from other poetry to which it bears a superficial resemblance. On the page, it can look like other short-lined nonmetrical poetry, yet the fact that the line in *Mexico City Blues* does not run on, and thus has a real intonational value, means that the reader is likely to be drawn towards sound as the formal principle of the poem.

The collection's foregrounding of the intonation group seems to have three principal formal consequences. The formal potential of the group, in its relationship to the meaning of the poem, is emphasised. The formal potential of the accents contained within each group is similarly underlined, from the points of view of both rhythm and tonal movement. Finally, attention is drawn towards the possible combination of these groups within larger intonational structures. Each of these will be explored in turn, with one exception: the discussion of tonal movement is of a length that necessitates its being placed at the end of this section.

---

[18]Tomachevski, p. 155.

a) The intonation group as unit of form

The formal potential of the intonation group is most fully illustrated by the 221st Chorus. It recounts changes in American music and performative styles, through an opposition between jazz musicians old and new:

221st Chorus

Old Man Mose
Early American Jazz pianist
Had a grandson
Called Deadbelly.
Old Man Mose walloped
the rollickin keyport
Wahoo wildhouse Piany
with monkies in his hair
drooling spaghetti, beer
and beans, with a cigar
mashed in his countenance
of gleaming happiness
the furtive madman
of old sane times.

Deadbelly dont hide it –
Lead killed Leadbelly –
Deadbelly admit
Deadbelly modern cat
Cool – Deadbelly, Man,
Craziest.
Old Man Mose is Dead
But Deadbelly get Ahead
Ha ha ha[19]

The references in this poem are not straightforward. I have been unable to trace any pianist, or indeed any musician, named Old Man Mose, and therefore assume that the name is used by Kerouac to denote the type or myth of the barrelhouse pianist. It seems likely that the name was suggested by Louis Armstrong's song 'Ol' Man Mose', co-written with Zilner Trenton Randolph. First recorded in 1935, and published in 1936, the song was re-recorded by Armstrong, and released on an LP record in 1955 - the year of *Mexico City Blues*'s composition.[20] The song tells of 'an

---

[19]*Mexico City Blues*, p. 223.
[20]Louis Armstrong and Zilner Trenton Randolph, 'Ol' Man Mose' (New York: Santly Bros.-Joy, 1936). The 1955 recording appeared on Gene Norman Presents Louis

ol' man with a very crooked nose', found dead in his log hut. Its rather heartless chorus is as follows:

> I believe ol' man, I believe ol' man,
> I believe ol' man, that OL' MAN MOSE is dead.
> I believe ol' man, I believe ol' man,
> I believe ol' man, that OL' MAN MOSE is dead. Now
> I believe Mose 'kick'd the bucket', I believe Mose 'kick'd the bucket'
> I believe Mose 'kick'd the bucket', an OL' MAN MOSE is dead. Oh!
> I believe Mose 'kick'd the bucket', I believe Mose 'kick'd the bucket'
> I believe Mose 'kick'd the bucket', an OL' MAN MOSE is dead.[21]

The penultimate line of Kerouac's poem - 'Old Man Mose is Dead' - draws directly on this source.

The reference to Deadbelly is also problematic, at least at first sight; it can easily be assumed that the folk-blues singer Leadbelly, referred to in the line following, is meant.[22] However, apart from the fact that Leadbelly had no pianist grandfather called Mose or anything else, l. 16's parenthetical assertion that 'Lead killed Leadbelly' seems explicitly intended to rule him out of the poem; the fact that lead did *not* kill Leadbelly, in bullet form or any other - he died of Lou Gehrig's disease - seems to suggest that the names are locatable, as with Old Man Mose, only in a realm of archetypes.

One interpretation is that 'Deadbelly' is to be understood as the type of the sophisticated modern musician, speaking a jargon of 'Cool' and 'Craziest', but lacking the passionate engagement which the poem ascribes to his musical forebears, and, perhaps, as indifferent to those forebears as is the singer of 'Ol' Man Mose' to the man whose cadaver he has found. The contrast between Old Man Mose and Deadbelly is expressed in part by

---

Armstrong at the Crescendo, Vol. 2. Brunswick LAT 8085; that of 1935 has been reissued on Louis Armstrong. Rhythm Saved the World: The Original Decca Recordings. MCA GRP 16022. 1991.

[21]Armstrong and Randolph, [pp. 2-3].

[22]Huddie Ledbetter, "Leadbelly" (1888-1949). See Charles Wolfe and Kip Lornell, *The Life and Legend of Leadbelly* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1993).

differences of lexis and syntax between the passages dealing with each: the description of the pianist is rich in vocabulary and imagery, and includes one quite lengthy sentence (ll. 7-14), while that of Deadbelly is limited to a few sputterings of hiptalk. The visual layout of the poem also reflects something of the two musicians' contrasting styles. These factors are likely to have a direct influence on intonation, yet intonation has its own contribution to make to the success of the poem.

One aspect of this is via a contrast in the way the names 'Old Man Mose' and 'Deadbelly' are presented. 'Old Man Mose', as noun-phrase subject, is lengthier than 'Deadbelly', and thus more likely to be assigned its own intonation group. That it constitutes the whole of l. 1 - and that linebreak is associated with intonation-group boundary in this collection - more or less guarantees this. Remembering l. 1, the reader of l. 4 may again assign 'Old Man Mose' its own intonation group, and the effect of the mid-line pause that is likely to result may be heard as suggestive of the pianist's performative style, as he is grandly presented, stands poised, then dives into and over the 'rollickin keyport'. In contrast, the name 'Deadbelly' is unlikely to be ascribed its own intonation-group, always being included in a longer line that seems to make a virtue of its terseness. There is little sense of Deadbelly's being poised before a spectacular performance. When the two musicians are brought together in the poem's final lines, a reading that has preserved the intonational difference - a separate group for Old Man Mose, none for Deadbelly - is able to draw a striking contrast between them:

/ Old Man Mose / is Dead /
But Deadbelly get Ahead /
Ha ha ha /

If 'Old Man Mose is Dead' is split up in this way, while 'But Deadbelly get Ahead' is not, the differences between the two - the older man a fine

musician, but dead; the younger, 'dead' in his 'belly' but ambitious and successful - is intonationally reinforced by the unity and faster tempo of the latter group.

b) The role of rhythm

The role of rhythm within *Mexico City Blues* escapes easy definition. The poems are mainly nonmetrical, although some include passages that are close to metre.[23] Nonetheless, there is a sense that they *might* be found to be strongly rhythmic, if performed in a certain way. An important contributing factor in this is the manner in which, in some poems, intonation groups containing similar accentual distribution succeed each other, but do not resemble a familiar stanzaic structure; where quasi-stanzaic structures do emerge, they are not repeated. This creates the suggestion of rhythm, without actually defining what that rhythm may be. Among the poems recorded by Kerouac, perhaps the most interesting from this point of view is the 80th Chorus:

80th Chorus

GOOFING AT THE TABLE
"You just dont know."
"What dont I know?"
"How good this ham n eggs
is
"If you had any idea
whatsoever
How good this is
Then you would stop
writing poetry
And dig in."

"It's been so long
since I been hungry
it's like a miracle."

Ah boy but them bacon
And them egg –

---

[23]For example, from the 22nd Chorus: 'Ninety devils jokin with me / And I'm running on the catwalk / At Margaritee'.

Where the hell
is the scissor?
SINGING:– "You'll never know
just how much I love you."[24]

Here, the lines have their customary relationship to intonation group, although there are some enjambments that seem visually motivated, such as that in 'how good this ham n eggs | is'. From the point of view of rhythm, a pattern of accents emerges from this intonational structure which is strongly suggestive of the rhythms of everyday conversation, yet is not very far from metre.

The poem most clearly approaches metricality in ll. 2-5, which suggest a dipodic rhythm:

"You just dont know."
o B ȯ b
"What dont I know?"
ȯ B o b
"How good this ham n eggs
o B o b o B
is
o (b)[25]

These lines do not need to be given what C.S. Lewis calls a 'minstrel' performance for their metricality to be perceived.[26] As the above notation illustrates, the dipodic metre is strong enough to accommodate demotions and an unrealised beat; it will also withstand the slight pause necessary each time one of the two speakers finishes his 'turn'.[27] The perception of metre is encouraged by the fact that the first accent in every turn is likely to be nuclear, as each speaker challenges the other:

---

[24]*Mexico City Blues*, p. 80.
[25]'GOOFING AT THE TABLE' has the appearance of a title, but is for numbering purposes here treated as a line. Lines which may be run on ('How good this ham n eggs / is' are counted as two lines.
[26]C.S. Lewis, 'Metre', in *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. by Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 280-85 (p. 280).
[27]They are identified by Jones (pp. 35-36) as Kerouac and his neighbour, William Garvey. On the rhythmic component of 'turn-taking', see Couper-Kuhlen, *English Speech Rhythm*, *passim*.

/ you jUst dont know /
"whAt dont I know?" /
"how gOOd / this ham n Eggs
is /

This projects a strong metrical expectation into the performance and perception of the rest of the line, an expectation which makes possible the syncopating effects of promotion and demotion. Metricality is also enhanced by the fact that there are a total of eight beats, creating, in effect, the first half of a 4x4 stanza.

Its 'fourness', and the alternation of strong and weak beats, distinguish this metre from the 2.2.2 [...] patterns seen in poems from *The Tempers*, notably 'Contemporania'. Kerouac's practice has similarities to that of Williams, in that it combines metricality with an imitation of the rhythms and intonation found in everyday speech. It also permits the metre to be relinquished easily; the dipodic, 2x4 pattern does not underlie the whole poem. However, Kerouac achieves a different effect, in that although the metre which opens this poem is abandoned, the suggestion of metricality is not. In ll. 2-5, strong beats are aligned with nuclei; as the poem continues, and as individual lines continue to encourage a reading as single intonation groups, this alignment can continue. Lines 6-11, for example, may be read as one-beat lines, grouped into two sequences of three beats by the boundary after '...good this is'. The pause at this boundary, which corresponds to a major syntactic juncture, is likely to be relatively long; a similarly long pause will follow the full stop which closes l. 11. These pauses create, in turn, the opportunity for the lines to be interpreted as a pair of four-beat groups with unrealised final beats:

"if you had Any idea / whatsoEver / how gOOd this is /
B B B [B]
then you would stOp / writing pOetry / and dig In."
B B B [B]

Such a reading is suggested both by lineation and by the metrical role of the nucleus in the lines which precede. If it is adopted, a subtle metrical effect is revealed to underlie the whole stanza. The eight beats of ll. 2-5, a dipodic pattern in which every second beat is relatively weak, are succeeded by a further eight beats, each of which, where realised, is strong. The stanza as a whole thus stands as an example of 4x4 underlying rhythm, realised as 4.4.3.3, and with a doubling of the metrical base, and probably a halving of the tempo, halfway through.

This is a formal structure of considerable subtlety. The shift from dipodic to non-dipodic rhythms within a single stanza is not unique to this poem; it was seen in the second stanza of 'Postlude'. In this Chorus, the shift is achieved within the confines of a 4x4 pattern, and allows that pattern nonetheless to be perceived; the sense of completeness felt at the end of l. 11 characterises the end of such patterns. It also includes two changes of speaker, and its success in this respect suggests a careful handling of intonation as well as rhythm. The pattern has several different effects. The slowing of tempo brought by the shift away from dipodism reinforces the relatively meditative air of ll. 6-11, while the collaboration of different speakers in creating a single metrical pattern is suggestive of the pleasures of friendship and conversation. Indeed, the poem as a whole can be read as an evocation of the pleasures of speech.[28] The first speaker suggests that the pleasure of eating outweighs that of poetry; the rhythmic playfulness of the poem's language, its evocation of a 'miracle', its happy riff on the grammar of number in ll. 15-18, and its conclusion in song - a popular standard by Harry Warren and Mack Gordon - provide a convincing counter-argument.[29] Whatever their semantic importance,

---

[28]This theme runs throughout *Mexico City Blues*, which is strewn with unconventional and nonsense syllables.

[29]'You'll Never Know (Just How Much I Love You)' had been interpreted by singers Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald, and saxophonist Ben Webster.

speech patterns which combine a fidelity to the rhythms and intonation of conversation, yet engage with metre in such a manner, offer complex pleasures to both speaker and listener.

The description of this performance of ll. 2-11 as metrical is in accordance with the beat-based definition of metre; that the triple and quadruple offbeats which it contains are not permissible within the *REP* rules illustrates the strong contrast between the likely prosodic style of this poem and that of most metrical poetry. Whether the poem is metrical raises some of the questions discussed in conjunction with 'Postlude', which it would not be profitable to re-enter here. Two points can be made: as in 'Postlude', the metrical reading brings significant aesthetic reward; in contrast to 'Postlude', metricality does not pervade the whole poem. In later lines, such as ll. 15-18, rhythms are less likely to coalesce into metrical patterns.

In its encouragement, through diction and lineation, of patterns of beats that are characteristic of the most rhythmic speech - strong, often based around the nucleus, but patterned only sporadically - the 80th Chorus is characteristic of many in *Mexico City Blues*. In assimilating those rhythms to those of metre, such that both are well served, it achieves something more unusual.

c) The role of pitch

Finally, if the intonation group points readers and listeners to the rhythmic potential of the accents which it contains, it should also point to these accents' intonational potential. That this is the case is clear without close analysis; few readers of lines such as:

/ "if you had **A**ny idea /
whatso**E**ver /
how g**OO**d this is /[...]"

are likely to resist the temptation to expressive flourish which they extend; one possibility would be to increase the height from which successive nuclei fall. However, it is not as easy to demonstrate that such tones have formal potential beyond this and similar examples, and beyond any formal role played by syntax and meaning. On the one hand, it requires a poem in which this genuinely seems to be the case; on the other, the analysis is likely to be lengthy. Such a demonstration is attempted in this chapter, but it is given a section to itself, below.

B) INDENTATION, KEY AND PARATONE

If the foregrounding of intonation group within *Mexico City Blues* leads the reader to investigate the formal potential both of the group itself, and of the rhythmic and intonational material which it contains, it may also serve to point the reader's attention to the way in which intonation groups combine to form larger structures.

In Chapter 4, the intonational correlates of textual and discoursal structure were shown to be *key* and *paratone*. Every intonation group has a key, defined as *high*, *mid* or *low* by the height of its onset. High key signals a new topical orientation, while low key is associated with a parenthesis or prolongation; mid key is neutral. The notations used are, respectively, ***h***, ***m***, and ***l***, although it is sometimes simpler to use ***h*** and ***l*** alone, and leave mid-key groups unmarked. Where a sequence of intonation groups ends with a fall to low in the speaker's pitch range, the sequence may be perceived as a paratone; the nature of that paratone is decided by the key of its first intonation group. There are three minor paratones, high, mid and low, each of which has a discoursal role relative to other paratones similar to those listed. Minor paratones that begin high signal a major new topical orientation, and mark the simultaneous

beginning of a new major paratone; mid-key minor paratones are neutral; low-key are parenthetical or prolongational. The notations for minor paratones are ***[H]***, ***[M]*** and ***[L]***; since major paratones always begin with a high-key minor paratone, no additional notation is required.

The distinguishing feature of printed poetry in respect of paratone is that it possesses resources denied to the writer of prose to signal paratone boundaries. This is also true in respect of intonation groups, as has been shown, yet while the cue to intonation-group boundary - linebreak - is relatively straightforward, that which is here proposed as the cue to changes in key and paratone - indentation - is much less so. Indentation is used with great variety within *Mexico City Blues*, and in some cases is unlikely to have any intonational consequences. Any significance attached to reverse indentation, used in the 66th Chorus, or to lines centrally justified, as in the 38th, is likely to be purely visual. However, in many cases there does seem to be a strong correlation between indentation and meaning, and one that may find intonational expression.

A simple example of this is provided by the 221st Chorus. It is likely that the passage devoted to Old Man Mose will be read as a single major paratone, subdivided into two minor paratones that follow syntax:

[H] Old Man Mose
Early American Jazz pianist
Had a grandson
Called Deadbelly.
[M] Old Man Mose walloped
the rollickin keyport
Wahoo wildhouse Piany
with monkies in his hair
drooling spaghetti, beer
and beans, with a cigar
mashed in his countenance
of gleaming happiness
the furtive madman
of old sane times.

Given the gradually accruing clausal structure of these sentences, there is little reason for the key of groups within these paratones to depart from neutral mid-level. The paratones are thus visually and intonationally homogenous, an effect that is particularly noticeable in the second and longer of the two.

The re-introduction of Deadbelly in l. 15 is accompanied by a shift back to the left-hand margin. It creates a new orientation for the poem, and the new minor paratone which will begin on this line if, as seems likely, l. 14 has closed with a fall to low, may therefore be assigned high key, and thus also begin a new major paratone. There is little sense in which the interjections that begin in l. 15 cohere into a whole, so that, apart from the parenthesis supposedly explaining Leadbelly's death, each line seems to constitute a renewed attempt on lucidity. The intonation groups associated with these lines are therefore likely to be assigned high key:

[H] / Deadbelly dont hide it –
/ **[l]** Lead killed Leadbelly –
/ **[h]** Deadbelly admit
/ **[h]** Deadbelly modern cat
/ **[h]** Cool [...] /

This contrasts greatly with the syntactic and intonational smoothness of the previous stanza. The indentation reinforces this contrast. In the stanza devoted to Mose's piano playing, the 'stack' presentation encourages the reader to find in the creation of this long, smooth paratone a pleasure in performance similar to that associated with Mose; as the lines devoted to Deadbelly repeatedly fail to develop a textual or intonational unit that is comparable, the force of the comparison between the two musicians in this respect is strengthened.[30] Furthermore, there is an irregular correlation of indentation and key in the Deadbelly stanza; the extra indentation on l. 16

[30]The term *stack* is suggested by Jones (p. 169).

seems at first to reflect its parenthetical status - Leadbelly's mention prompted by that of Deadbelly - but that on l. 18 has no such explanation. An association of indentation and low key is thus set up, only to be quickly abandoned, further encouraging the impression of incoherence with which these lines cause Deadbelly to be associated.

Such foregrounding of key and paratone is recurrent in those poems in *Mexico City Blues* that deal with the figure of the musician. An extended example can be found in the 81st, 82nd and 83rd Choruses, which between them continue the 'Goofing at the Table' theme of no. 80, discussed above. The 81st begins with an evocation of 'Mr Beggar and Mrs Davy' - for Jones, a play on the words 'bacon and eggs' - before adopting a diction which Jones describes as 'a rather crude imitation of African-American dialect'.[31] The diction is less material here than the form, however, which Jones describes as that of a 'bop trumpet solo':

> Dem eggs & dem dem
> Dere bacons, baby,
> If you only lay that
> down on a trumpet,
> 'Lay that down
> solid brother
> 'Bout all dem
> bacon & eggs
> Ya gotta be able
> to lay it down
> solid –
> All that luney and fruney[32]

The 81st Chorus ends at this point, but the 82nd continues in the same vein:

> Fracons, acons, & beggs,
> Lay, it, all that
> be bobby
> be buddy
> I didn't took
> I could think
> So

---

[31]Jones, p. 95.
[32]*Mexico City Blues*, p. 81.

bepo
beboppy

Luney & Juney
– if –
that's the way
they get
kinda hysterical

Looney & Boony
Juner and Mooner
Moon, Spoon, and June[33]

Jones's identification of this passage with a trumpet solo is hard to dispute, and part of the function of the multiple indents is iconic, denoting such a solo's phrasing and progress. For example, the text of the 82nd Chorus seems to suggest the development of a fairly lengthy theme from a staccato opening - 'Lay, it, all that [...]' - but with certain motifs or ideas worked at, in passing, more thoroughly ('be bobby / be buddy').

Their iconic function makes the indentations very noticeable, and lends them significance. In consequence, they may have a direct influence on intonation, comparable to, or even stronger than, that of syntax. For example, the reader is unlikely to fall to low pitch, and thus begin a new minor paratone, when the indentation suggests a structure that is continuing to unfurl. For instance, in the sequence

So
bepo
beboppy

Luney & Juney
– if –
that's the way
they get
kinda hysterical

there are two items which, on syntactic and semantic grounds, might invite a fall to low pitch and thus signal the end of the active minor paratone:

---

[33]*Mexico City Blues*, p. 82.

'beboppy' and 'if', the last a candidate not for its own sake, but because of the unusually coherent clause which follows. The indentation, however, continues unbroken, and the reader is unlikely to feel that such a reading is appropriate. The extension of a minor paratone beyond the point where the reader might otherwise bring it to a close has a slightly vertiginous effect, suitable to the evocation of an extended jazz solo.

The end of such indented passages is typically also the end of a sentence, or at least a series of linked clauses, and so is likely to be marked by a fall to low pitch, and thus the end of a minor paratone. It can be suggested that the degree to which the text then returns towards the left -hand margin has an influence on the reader's choice of key for the paratone that follows. As in the case just discussed, this influence is principally a negative one, and serves to discourage the reader from a performance that other cues might indicate.

This influence is illustrated by the 104th Chorus:

104th Chorus

I'd rather be thin than famous,
I don't wanna be fat,
And a woman throws me outa bed
Callin me Gordo, & everytime
I bend
to pickup
my suspenders
from the davenport
floor I explode
loud huge grunt-o
and disgust
every one
in the familio

I'd rather be thin than famous
But I'm fat

Paste that in yr. Broadway Show[34]

---

[34]*Mexico City Blues*, p. 104. *Gordo* (Sp.): 'fat'.

Here, the 'stack' does not have a musical significance, but functions as a pun, both visual and - via paratone - intonational, on the laborious descent which the speaker must make if he is to succeed in picking up his braces. The word 'familio', which marks the end of this episode, is likely to be read with a fall to low, and a new minor paratone will therefore be expected. The lines which follow, ll. 14-15, repeat the poem's original proposition, but absorb the recent explosion into an admission of that proposition's hopelessness: 'I'd rather be thin than famous / But I'm fat'. It is tempting to begin a new major paratone on these lines; its high onset on 'rather' would recall the high onset on the same word in l. 1, and use the intonational parallel as an ironic contrast to the defeat embodied in the words:

[H] I'd rather be thin than famous,
I don't wanna be fat

[...]

[H] I'd rather be thin than famous,
But I'm fat

Against such a parallelism, however, stands the fact that ll. 14-15 are not visually parallel with ll. 1-2: they do not return all the way to the left-hand margin, and are indented in a way not previously seen within the poem. The effect is to discourage the reader from pitching high the onset on 'rather' - which would cause a new major paratone to begin - since the lines' failure to move all the way to the left implies that they have an unfinished relationship with the material that immediately precedes. In consequence, ll. 14-15 may instead be kept within the umbrella of the existing major paratone, and pitched at low or mid key; that is, instead of:

[...]
and disgust
every one
in the familio

[H] I'd rather be thin than famous
But I'm fat

Paste that in yr. Broadway Show /

the reader is encouraged to produce:

[...]
and disgust
every one
in the familio

[M/L] I'd rather be thin than famous
But I'm fat

Paste that in yr. Broadway Show

Whether mid or low key is chosen, the major paratone begun in the stack may continue to the end of the poem.

Such a performance exemplifies the way in which the cues provided by indentation can override the paratone boundaries which the syntax and prose semantics of Kerouac's poetry might suggest. In this instance, the overriding seems entirely to the benefit of the poem. A high key on ll. 14-15, and thus a new major paratone, risks flagging them too clearly as the 'point' of the poem - the intonational equivalent of laughing as the punchline begins. By discouraging this reading, the indentation permits the lines to sound wryer, and slightly less smart. The poem's last line - which seems curiously weak - is perhaps best seen as occupying the culminative place which would otherwise be taken by ll. 14-15, and, by lengthening the sentence begun on those lines, preventing the choice of a minor rather than a major paratone from bringing a sense of anticlimax.

This is rather a 'negative' use of paratone, in that it rescues the humour of the poem from a resolution which might otherwise seem glib. Cues to a similar use of paratone can be seen in the endings to many of the poems in *Mexico City Blues*; examples are the 84th, 96th and 149th Choruses. The device seems to be one of those which Kerouac employs in this collection

to undercut potentially unsatisfactory endings; others include bad rhyme (49th Chorus), a liberal use of capital letters (19th Chorus), and a general archness of tone (74th Chorus).

C) NUCLEAR TONE

To close this discussion, I should like to examine the poem which, from a formal point of view, is that which I find most interesting of all those in *Mexico City Blues*. It seems to me to use intonation group and paratone as successfully as any of the poems so far discussed and, in addition, to use the direction of the nuclear tone itself as a structural device. If this is so, it is unusual, and this discussion is probably the most experimental section of a relatively experimental chapter. It is a discussion which has the further disadvantage of lacking the control of an authorial recording, since the poem in question does not figure among Kerouac's commercial recordings. Nonetheless, it is possible that the alternative recording to be appealed to, by Allen Ginsberg, will tend to support the reading proposed; and in any case, it is hoped that the reading will be worth debating.

The poem is the 182nd Chorus:

182nd Chorus

The Essence of Existence
is Buddhahood –
As a Buddha
you know
that all the sounds
that wave from a tree
and the sights
from a sea of fairies
in Isles of Blest
and all the tastes
in Nectar Soup
and all the odors
in rose arbour
– ah rose, July rose –
bee-dead rose –

and all the feelings
in the titwillow's
chuckling throat
and all the thoughts
in the raggedy mop
of the brain –
one dinner[35]

Although I find the form of this poem distinctive and effective, there is no doubt that much of the poem's appeal can be attributed to its other qualities. It is worth discussing the poem in general terms, therefore, before considering its use of form.

One aspect of its success is perhaps its treatment of Buddhism - a theme of which, as stated in the introduction, Kerouac's use in *Mexico City Blues* has been controversial. The poem seems exceptionally accessible to readers who have no especial allegiance to Buddhist thought or beliefs; in comparison, others among the Buddhist choruses are extremely rebarbative. The poem's argument gives the impression of simplicity, although it is open to multiple interpretations. It suggests, on one reading, that it is important to be aware of the physical realities that underlie apparently elevated mental states, including those which find beauty or tranquillity in the natural world; all such phenomena can be broken down, in the end, to the kind of material processes of consumption and absorption symbolised by the 'dinner'. Another, contrary reading suggests that to Buddhahood - to enlightened consciousness - all physical phenomena may be grist to a spiritual mill, 'dinner' for reflection, food for thought. A third interpretation might see this chorus as analogous to Allen Ginsberg's 'Big Eats', discussed in the previous chapter, exhorting the reader towards a concentration on the simple physical tasks - eating, walking - which may be the most fundamental realities of life. My own knowledge of Buddhism is not sufficiently detailed to determine whether it might support one in

---

[35]*Mexico City Blues*, p. 182.

particular of these interpretations, yet, in reading terms, I do not feel that the poem forces such a choice; the dominant experience of reading the 182nd Chorus is of the shape of the argument, and of that argument's resolution in a way that may not be conclusive, but is rhetorically satisfying. Part of this satisfaction is, as I hope to show, due to the likely intonational profile of this poem; part, however, must be due to the fact that the argument proceeds by metaphor, rather than by dogma.

The nature of these metaphors, and of all of the imagery used within the poem, is also notable. The Buddhist theme is developed using imagery whose sources are predominantly Western; these range from the commonplace, such as l. 8's 'fairies', to the culturally specific - the Isles of the Blest, towards which, according to Dante, Odysseus made his final voyage, and the nicely neo-Olympian 'Nectar soup'. There is also a range of imagery drawn from the natural world, some of it relatively free of allusion - the 'titwillow's chuckling throat', suggestive of nature as a source of joy - and some, notably the rose, rich in overtones of the lyric tradition.[36] In each case, the imagery is given added weight by another factor. The rose, for example, develops into a 'July rose' - the naming of the month adding to the impression that a real rose is being spoken of, and not just a stock cultural unit - and a 'bee-dead rose'. This last reference is comparatively obscure, although one explanation might be in terms of flowering times - has the rose in Mexico ceased blooming in July, such that it is of no use to bees seeking pollen and propagating life? - and another in terms of the pun which the words 'bee-dead' contain. Just as, in the Petrarchan tradition in which the rose flourished as an image, every positive (e.g. fire) implies its negative (e.g. ice), so this symbol of love and

---

[36] On the other hand, the word *titwillow*, which is in neither *Webster's* nor the *OED*, occurs nowhere else that I can find except the refrain of W.S. Gilbert's famous 'The Suicide's Lament': 'Oh willow, titwillow, titwillow!'.

beauty can function as a *memento mori*, reminding that s/he who looks at it will one day 'be(e) dead'; a reflection which, to my understanding, is more than compatible with Buddhist tradition, and with the argument of this poem. Again, however, the reader's impression that a convincing metaphorical scheme is in operation may be stronger than his or her need to seek that scheme's exact logic.

This impression is likely to be reinforced by the careful progression which the different images display. Lines 3-15 proceed in turn through four of the five senses - 'sounds', 'sights', 'tastes', 'odors'; following a blank space, ll. 16-21 move to 'feelings' - ambivalent, in that 'feelings' may refer to both sensation and emotion - and then to 'thoughts'; finally, to 'the brain'. The coherence of this progress is also helped by the many rhymes and assonances that link lines together: 'trees' / 'fairies', 'Blest' / 'tastes', 'odors' / 'arbour', 'rose' / 'rose' / 'titwillow's'. These phonetic echoes are reinforced by semantic devices such as the synaesthetic pun which causes 'waves' to look back to 'sounds', but forwards to 'sea'. The reader is thus led through a series of phonetically and semantically linked lines that embody an apparently natural sequence of sound, sight, taste, smell, feeling and thought, and that contain imagery repeatedly handled in such a way as to suggest a combination of material presence with symbolic value. All of this creates a strong sense of rhetorical shape; it also leads convincingly to the poem's penultimate image, that of the 'raggedy mop of the brain', which is visually striking, and, in the context, an appropriate evocation of the site both of biological consciousness and of spiritual contemplation. It thereby adds to the surprise of the final line, which not only lacks the verb which the relative clause begun by 'you know / that [...]' had apparently been anticipating for seventeen lines, but which in its choice of image - 'one dinner' - seems poised between oracular profundity and bathos.

If intonation is to play an important role in the poem, early signals to that effect are probably necessary. Syntactically, ll. 1-2 are at once straightforward - subject, verb, complement - and puzzling, since the hyphen that closes l. 2 seems to indicate that the sentence continues, while l. 3 gives a contrary signal. The lineation suggests that an intonation-group boundary will fall at the end of l. 1, while the syntax and punctuation, whatever their ambiguities, combine to suggest a further boundary at the end of l. 2:

(1) / The Essence of Existence /
is Buddhahood – /

The break which the lineation cues after l. 1, a topicalised and relatively lengthy noun-phrase subject, is likely to feel quite natural. A further break may optionally be inserted after 'essence', depending on the tempo of the performance, and on the weight which the reader chooses to give to each word. The accentual distribution of these lines will therefore be one of the following:

(2) / the essence of exIstence /
is bUddhahood – /

(3) / the Essence / of exIstence/
is bUddhahood –[37]

Having determined that one of these patterns of accents will be used, it becomes interesting to investigate the tonal choices which the speaker has. That in l.2, on 'Buddhahood', is probably not open to much doubt: given that, to all intents and purposes, it closes a declarative sentence, and given the relatively decisive air of that sentence, a falling nucleus seems

[37]A third possibility, which seems unsatisfactory, would give 'essence' the nuclear accent in l. 1, and leave 'existence' unaccented; this would suggest that the 'existence' constituted 'old stuff' within the utterance, whereas 'essence' did not.

necessary. Its height is slightly less easy to predict, given the dialectal differences discussed in Chapter 4; my own choice is a high fall, to reflect the high level of speaker involvement which such a statement seems to imply:

/...is `Buddhahood /

Line 1, the subject phrase, may be less easily predicted, yet the likelihood is that some form of rise will be selected. As discussed in Chapter 4, the most common tonal sequence of all in English is probably that which associates a rise with a sentence non-final intonation group, and a fall with the sentence-final group which follows it: the rise signals that there is 'more to come'. Of the rises, Cruttenden notes that that associated with noun-phrase subjects given their own intonation group is the fall-rise, and the fall-rise is, indeed, a tone which would seem particularly well-suited to this poem's l. 1. This is true, moreover, whichever of performances (2) and (3) is selected. If (2), then the tone will be located on the line's sole nucleus, 'ist-', with a pre-nuclear accent, probably a fall, on 'Ess-':

(2a) / The `Essence of Ex˘istence /

If (3), the fall-rise will be compounded over both intonation groups, with the fall element on the first nucleus, and the rise element on the second:

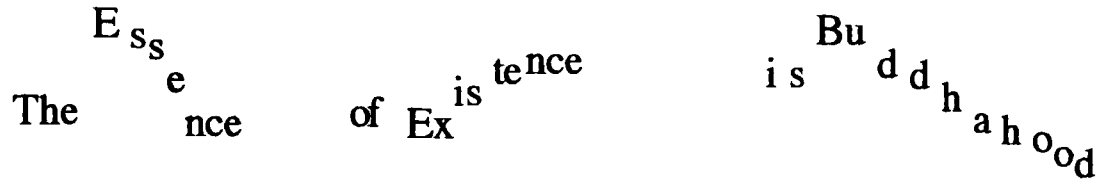
(3a) / The `Essence / of Ex´istence/

In either case, the lines, taken together as a whole will form the pattern of anticipatory fall-rise in l. 1, followed by sentence-final fall in l. 2:

(2b) / The `Essence of Ex˘istence /
is `Buddhahood – /

(3b) / The `Essence / of Ex´istence/
is `Buddhahood –

An alternative notation, that of Dwight Bolinger, makes the movements more explicit. This is performance (3b), with the fall-rise and fall clearly visible:



This account of a single sentence's likely intonation may seem laborious; in essence, what has been said is that the poem begins with a sentence, for the above is, as just stated, the most common of all English patterns. This fact aids the prediction of its occurrence here, yet it remains to be demonstrated why that occurrence is poetically interesting.

One reason may be that the poem encourages its readers to find it interesting. It has already been demonstrated that the reader of *Mexico City Blues* is repeatedly led, by the dependence of lineation on intonation, to consider intonation a formal principle sufficient to poetry, and to explore that principle's aesthetic potential. In these lines, the linebreak after 'Existence' forces the boundary there, and thus leads the reader to concentrate on the forces that differentiate the two lines thus separated. That every noun in the sentence has an initial capital letter draws further attention to the qualities of each one; that those in l. 1 rhyme ensures that the qualities attended to will include phonetic ones. These include accent, and in at least two of the three nouns a nuclear accent. Finally, that the tone which closes l. 1 is likely to be a fall-rise is a further inducement: this is a tone which promises 'more to come', and thus in some sense projects itself over the linebreak. In conjunction with the semantics of the sentence,

this has a strong appeal: the promised 'more to come' constitutes, after all, the revelation of the Essence of Existence.

As the poem continues, it becomes clear to the reader that it offers a continual alternation of lines promising 'more to come', and those that fulfil at least part of that promise; in the terms of phrasal analysis, 'anticipations' alternate with 'arrivals', although, given the deferral of the verb, these arrivals themselves give rise to anticipations.[38] The anticipations include the many lines beginning with the sequence ['that' + noun-phrase subject], which are likely, like the first line, to take a fall-rise tone; the arrivals are those lines which, although they do not complete a clause, nonetheless develop the image surrounding the noun-phrase subject in sufficient detail to create an aesthetically satisfying whole. These, like l. 2, are likely to be uttered with a falling tone. The intonational structure of the poem is built around this repeated pattern of nuclear fall-rise followed by nuclear fall, with other, non-nuclear accents serving to fill out and give variety to this basic motif. The pattern at its simplest occurs over just two intonation groups:

As a ˇBuddha /
you `know /
[...]

and `all the ˇtastes /
in >Nectar `Soup /

A variation on this pattern is provided, towards the end of the poem, by the stretching of the second intonation group into a third printed line:

and all the ˇfeelings /
in the `titwillow's
`chuckling `throat /

---

[38]Cureton, *Rhythmic Phrasing*, pp. 146-53.

The fall-rise / fall pattern is nonetheless maintained. In ll. 7-9, the pattern is extended over three intonation groups, with two fall-rises preceding the fall:

and the ˇsights /
from a >sea of ˇfairies /
in `Isles of `Blest

Such variations on an intonational theme help the performer to make the fall-rise / fall motif a source of complexity, as well as coherence. The poem's only departure from this motif comes in ll. 14-15:

/ – ah `rose, / Ju`ly rose – /
>bee-`dead rose – /

This break in the pattern is at the same time, by virtue of its parenthetical nature, a reflection on it, and thereby serves to reinforce the reader's sense of its strength.

Paratone plays an interesting role in the 182nd Chorus. There is, in the deferred syntax, a repeated failure to close the clause in such a way that a fall to low in the speaker's pitch range will ensue. The voice repeatedly rises to the rising or falling-rising nuclei, but the intervening falls are not low-falls:

that `all the ˇsounds /
that w>ave from a `tree /
and the ˇsights /
from a >sea of ˇfairies /
in `Isles of `Blest /
and `all the ˇtastes / [...]

This means that no new minor paratone may begin. The central section of the poem is likely to be performed as a single, rather lengthy minor paratone. Within it, the high rising nuclei are likely to show a gradual decline in pitch height, in accordance with the declination of the paratone. This creates a pattern reminiscent of the 'stepping head' described in

Chapter 4, but active across nuclei rather than within a single series of pre-nuclear accents. It is an attractive and unusual effect, and plays a major part in structuring the movement of the poem.

The poem's final line provides an interesting example of the way in which an utterance which is syntactically ill-formed can nevertheless be satisfying intonationally. It is here that reader and listener discover that the long-deferred main verb is not to arrive, and that the complex relative clause is to end only with an interjection: 'one dinner'. Semantically, on the other hand, it is clear that the line constitutes the culmination of the poem, albeit, as discussed earlier, an ambivalent one. Reconciling these conflicting cues, but almost certainly prioritising sense over syntax, the reader is likely to treat each of the line's two words as 'new stuff', and as important new stuff, meriting its own nuclear accent and intonation group:

/ One / dInner /

Performed in this way, the line has a two-part structure which recalls that of ll. 1-2. A further echo of those lines is likely to be provided by the tones selected. In order to give this syntactically unsatisfying line a sufficiently conclusive air, the speaker is likely to treat it as a cohesive unit, to be uttered as if itself constituting a well-formed sentence. This implies the pattern that the sentence, as stated above, typically takes: a rise followed by a fall. The first of these movements, like the second, is unlikely to be other than a simple rise, since an adjective such as 'one' so clearly implies a following noun that the fall-rise 'more to come' tone is unnecessary. A sequence of simple rise and simple fall thus concludes the 182nd Chorus; such a sequence, simple and cognitively satisfying, is an appropriate ending to a poem the exact meaning of whose argument may remain unclear to the reader, but in which the formal and rhetorical appeal of that argument are undeniable.

A complete notation of this performance is as follows. The key of each intonation group is noted where it is not simply mid-level; as usual, this is placed in upper case when the intonation group in question begins a new paratone:

/ [H] The `Essence / of Ex´istence/
is B`uddhahood – /
[M] As a ˇBuddha /
you `know /
that `all the ˇsounds /
that w>ave from a `tree /
and the ˇsights /
from a >sea of ˇfairies /
in `Isles of `Blest
and `all the ˇtastes /
in >Nectar `Soup /
and all the ˇodors /
in >rose `arbour /
[I] – ah `rose, / Ju`ly rose – /
>bee-`dead rose – /

and all the ˇfeelings /
in the `titwillow's
`chuckling ˇthroat /
and all the ˇthoughts /
in the `raggedy `mop
of the ˇbrain – /
´one / `dinner /

This is my preferred performance of the 182nd Chorus; certain accents may change - not all the fall-rises may be realised as such in a given reading - but its overall shape seems that best suited to the movement of the poem.

2 RECORDINGS

A) JACK KEROUAC: 'POETRY FOR THE BEAT GENERATION'

The recording used, the only one commercially available in which Kerouac reads from *Mexico City Blues*, was 'Poetry for the Beat Generation', a recording made in 1958 in collaboration with the pianist Steve Allen. The recording includes a reading of the 221st Chorus, a reading of the 80th to

83rd Choruses, inclusive, and a reading of the 104th Chorus.[39] All include Allen's piano accompaniment. This proved problematic in a way that should have been foreseen, in that the tempi selected for the reading seemed at times more suitable to the music than to the poetry. The 80th to 83rd Choruses are performed at a particularly fast tempo, and to music of a strong rhythmic character. This need not affect analysis of high-level discourse units such as the paratone, but complicates analysis of local effects, such as intonation-group boundary. In other tracks, no such problems were encountered, but the influence of the piano must be assumed to remain strong.

The suggestion that the default function of linebreak in *Mexico City Blues* was to cue intonation-group boundary was varyingly supported by the recordings. In no poem did the proportion of linebreak performed as intonation-group boundaries drop below 50%, and in one poem, the 221st Chorus, 21 of 22 linebreaks observed this correlation.[40] The local effects identified in this Chorus - the comparison between 'Old Man Mose', who was assigned his own intonation group, and 'Deadbelly', who was not - are, moreover, also present in Kerouac's reading, and seem to fulfil precisely the semantic function suggested.[41] In other poems, however, the proportion was lower: nine of fifteen linebreaks in the 80th Chorus, and nine of sixteen in no. 104, are read by Kerouac as cues to intonation-group boundary.

A possible explanation of these findings is that the cue to intonation-group boundary is over-ridden, in Kerouac's own performance, where another formal device is felt to be dominant. In the 104th Chorus, the

---

[39]Other Choruses included are the 149th, the 211th and the 239th to 241st, which are read as a group. Prose pieces complete the recording.
[40]A high proportion is found in the recorded choruses that are not discussed here.
[41]The exception is in the poem's antepenultimate line, where the words 'Old Man Mose is Dead' are performed by Kerouac as a single group.

linebreaks which are not performed as boundaries are all located in the stack, which Kerouac reads, at speed, as follows:

/ and a woman throws me outa bEd / [NO PAUSE]
callin me gOrdo,/ & everytime
i bend
to pickup
my suspenders
from the davenport
flOOr / i explOde/
loud huge grUnt-o /
and disgust
every one
in the famIlio /

The main sonic patterning device used here is assonance on the word containing the nucleus: 'gordo' / 'floor' / 'explode' / 'grunt-o' / 'familio'.[42] The stack layout, as noted above, has two functions: it serves as a visual evocation of the painful descent to the floor, and draws attention to the use of a single minor paratone as that descent's aural equivalent. Given this, it is unsurprising that the linebreaks which create it do not also function as cues to intonation-group boundary. Similarly, the dominant formal device in the 81st and succeeding choruses is the 'trumpet solo' paratone. In these poems, the linebreaks do tend to fall at potential intonation-group boundaries, but remain largely unrealised as such by Kerouac, who is again reading at speed, and pauses hardly at all. The dominant function of linebreak here is probably that of creating the four-line blocks of text which are indented progressively across the page, and which help to cue paratone. With the formal organisation of the poem assured at this higher discourse level, the performer need not foreground the individual intonation group.

The use of key and paratone was found to be broadly in keeping with that suggested. In the 81st and 82nd Choruses, the single minor paratone

[42]The Spanish for 'family' is, of course, *familia*, not *familio*.

with which the progressively indented blocks of text were identified was present in the recording. However, where I had implied that the shift back to the left-hand margin at the end of that passage should cue a new paratone, Kerouac pursues the same minor paratone - indeed, pursues it into the 83rd Chorus, which follows on from the 82nd without a pause. This possibility had not been considered in my analysis, and undermines the value of the comparison. Nevertheless, it may be said that the proposed correlation between the shift to a left-hand margin and the beginning of a new major paratone is, on the evidence of this poem, not a strong one.

In other poems, links did appear to be present between indentation, key and paratone. I had proposed the following reading of ll. 1-19 of the 221st Chorus:

[H] Old Man Mose
Early American Jazz pianist
Had a grandson
Called Deadbelly.
[M] Old Man Mose walloped
the rollickin keyport
Wahoo wildhouse Piany
with monkies in his hair
drooling spaghetti, beer
and beans, with a cigar
mashed in his countenance
of gleaming happiness
the furtive madman
of old sane times.

[H] / Deadbelly dont hide it –
/ **[l]** Lead killed Leadbelly –
/ **[h]** Deadbelly admit
/ **[h]** Deadbelly modern cat
/ **[h]** Cool [...] /

Kerouac's performance differs in several ways. At the end of l. 4, he does not appear to fall to low, although the nature of the recording makes it slightly difficult to be sure. If he does not, no new paratone begins in l. 5; instead, Kerouac gives low key to that line, presenting it - presumably on the grounds of the repetition of Old Man Mose's name - as subordinate to

those that precede. High key is as present in Kerouac's reading of ll. 15-19 as in mine. The low key on l. 16 and the high on l. 18 are reversed in Kerouac's performance, conveying a slightly different set of relationships between the lines - as in l. 5, a repeated name is taken by Kerouac as a cue to low key. However, the principle of an inconsistent association between indentation and low key is retained. Comparison between the readings thus suggests an encouraging combination of conformity with a basic structure - a smooth unrolling of intonation groups for Mose, a spasmodic use of high key and an imperfect fit between visual and intonational cues for Deadbelly - with differences at points of personal interpretation. A final difference of this kind is Kerouac's expressive use of high key in l. 12 ('of gleaming happiness').

In the 104th Chorus, the suggested correlation between a line that did not return to the left-hand margin, and the decision not to begin a new major paratone, was strongly supported by Kerouac's performance. Indeed, Kerouac goes even further, refusing not only a new major paratone, but even a new minor paratone: as in l. 4 of the 221st Chorus, Kerouac fails to fall to low at a point where such a reading had seemed to me very likely. Instead of the reading proposed, therefore:

[...]
and disgust
every one
in the familio

[M/L] I'd rather be thin than famous
But I'm fat

Paste that in yr. Broadway Show

Kerouac performs all of these lines as mid-key groups, within a single minor paratone. Again, this is a different performance to that which I had selected; again, the effect is to a certain extent the same. Both readings share the 'negative' interpretation of non-return to the left-hand margin as a

cue to avoid a grand conclusion; the comparison with the 81st Chorus suggests, albeit on the basis of a very limited sample, that non-return is a stronger cue than return.

B) ALLEN GINSBERG: 'MEXICO CITY BLUES'

Allen Ginsberg's performance of the 182nd Chorus is included in his complete reading of *Mexico City Blues*. The notation of Ginsberg's reading is given, in the table below, in the left-hand column; my own, discussed above, is given again in the right-hand column. A comparison and discussion follows.

AG reading:	My reading:
[H] /The `Essence / of Ex´istence/ is B`uddhah`ood – / `As a `Buddha / you ^know / that `all the `sounds / [NO PAUSE] that ´wave from a `tree / and the ´sights / from a ´sea of ˇfairies / [NO PAUSE] in `Isles of ´Blest / **[h]** and `all the ´tastes / [NO PAUSE] in `Nectar ´Soup / **[h]** and `all the `odors / **[h]** in ^rose ^arbour / **[h]** – `ah `rose, / **[h]** Ju`ly `rose – / **[h]** ˇbee-dead / ^rose – /  **[h]** and `all the ´feelings / [NO PAUSE] in the `titwillow's `chuckling ´throat / **[h]** and `all the `thoughts / in the `raggedy `mop of the ˇbrain – / **[h]** ´one / `dinner /	**[H]** / The `Essence / of Ex´istence/ is B`uddhahood – / **[M]** As a ˇBuddha / you `know / that `all the ˇsounds / that w>ave from a `tree / and the ˇsights / from a >sea of ˇfairies / in `Isles of `Blest and `all the ˇtastes / in >Nectar `Soup / and all the ˇodors / in >rose `arbour / **[l]** – ah `rose, / Ju`ly rose – / >bee-`dead rose – /  and all the ˇfeelings / in the `titwillow's `chuckling ˇthroat / and all the ˇthoughts / in the `raggedy `mop of the ˇbrain – / ´one / `dinner /

i) Intonation groups

The distribution of intonation groups is identical between the two performances, with one exception; where I read l. 15 as a single group, Ginsberg splits it, thus:

/ ˇbee-dead / ^rose – /

Ginsberg gives great emphasis to the word 'rose' in all its three occurrences in this poem, and this boundary is one manifestation of that special attention.

The two performances show some differences in the way in which intonation-group boundary is marked: my reading observes a pause at every boundary, whereas that of Ginsberg does not. This may reflect the relatively quick tempo at which he reads (the poem, including title, takes him thirty-five seconds), itself perhaps a product of the cassette producers' need to have a complete performance of the book fit on two 90-minute tapes. However, as the boundary in 'bee-dead rose' shows, Ginsberg does vary his tempo to suit the text, and so this explanation is unlikely to be the right one. A more likely explanation is simply that Ginsberg has other things to think about than discourse structure.

Finally, it is interesting to note that Ginsberg places a pause in the first group of l. 14:

/ `ah [PAUSE] `rose, / Ju`ly `rose – /

This pause is likely in part to derive from the extra attention given by Ginsberg, as stated, to each occurrence of the word 'rose'. However, the exclamatory 'ah' is also given great weight by Ginsberg, including a high pitch and much breathiness. A comparison can be drawn with Blake's 'Ah! Sun-flower', a poem to which Ginsberg frequently made reference as a touchstone for both composition and performance, observing in 1971 that

it is essential to accent 'Ah' just as strongly as 'Sun-flower'.[43] The same principle appears to be at work here.

ii) Accent distribution

The two performances observe a similar distribution of pitch accent. However, that of Ginsberg contains more accents than mine; whereas I deaccent several of the repetitions of the word 'all', for example, Ginsberg does not. On the other hand, I accent both elements of 'bee-dead', while Ginsberg treats it as a simple compound, accenting only 'bee'. This might suggest that my interpretation of the word as a play on 'be dead' is not shared by Ginsberg. In total, Ginsberg accents 42 syllables; I accent 36.

Because of the extra intonation group in Ginsberg's performance, it contains one extra accent with the status of a nucleus - that on 'bee-dead'. For the purposes of analysis, 25 nuclei are shared between the two performances, although there is one qualification to this: in l. 14, where I deaccent 'rose', leaving the nucleus to 'July', Ginsberg does not.

iii) Key and paratone

Ginsberg's reading makes a considerably greater use of variation in key than does mine. Apart from the high-key group which opens the poem, and the low-key group which introduces the meditation on the rose, all groups in my reading are mid-key; patterning is largely carried out by the nuclei. Ginsberg, on the other hand, makes frequent use of high key. From l. 10 onwards, every group beginning 'and all the [...]' is given a high onset on 'all'. In part, this serves to signal discourse structure which, as noted

---

[43] 'Improvised Poetics', p. 38.

above, Ginsberg's nuclei reflect less directly than do mine. It also, of course, conveys a sense of excitement repeatedly renewed. Ginsberg also uses high key for the groups containing asides and interjections, with high onsets on 'ah', 'July', 'bee-' and 'one'. Again, this encourages a feeling of heightened excitement.

The two readings differ slightly in their use of paratone. Both use it very sparingly, with only one major paratone, and with the poem's stretched syntax and deferred conclusion largely or wholly uninterrupted by any minor paratone boundary. I split the poem into two, beginning with a brief minor paratone that closes at the end of l. 2. Ginsberg, however, does not; at the end of l. 2 - the word 'Buddhahood -' he prevents his pitch level from falling to low. This reading is certainly more faithful to the detail of the text, as l. 2 closes with a hyphen, rather than the period which might have forced a low fall. It has the effect of causing the whole poem to be contained in a single minor paratone, with no subdivision reflecting argument structure; again, there is a sense that reflecting discourse structure is not Ginsberg's first priority.

iv) Tonal movements

Of the 35 accents whose placement is common to both performances, the tone selected by Ginsberg differs from mine on 17; among the smaller group of nuclear accents, a different choice is made on 12 of 25 occasions. In other words, the tone choice differs almost 50% of the time. These differences are concentrated in the central part of the poem; in the opening, ll. 1-2, and the conclusion, ll. 20-22, the two performances make identical tone choices. This is encouraging. Nonetheless, that 50% of tone choices are different does not appear to augur well for attempts to predict and

analyse tone choice on the grounds set out in this thesis, even if the sample - one poem, one reader - is limited.

A more hopeful result emerges if the five possible accent choices are considered as belonging to one of two groups. These two groups are those used by Cruttenden, who posits a basic distinction between rises and falls.[44]. 'Rises' are taken by him to include fall-rise and level tones, as well as the simple rise; 'falls' are taken to include rise-fall, as well as simple fall. It is interesting to re-examine the two performances on this basis, since a different choice within one of these two groups is likely to be less damaging to an account of poem's form than one between groups. Among the intra-group differences, for example, can be noted Ginsberg's tendency to use a simple rise where I select a fall-rise:

AG reading:	My reading:	
/ and the ´sights / – /	/ and the ˇsights /	(l. 7)
/ `chuckling ´throat /	/ `chuckling ˇthroat /	(l. 18)

and, contrarily, my use of simple falls where Ginsberg selects the rise-fall:

AG reading:	My reading:	
/ you ^know /	/ you `know /	(l. 4)
/ [...] ^arbour /	/ [...] `arbour /	(l. 13)

The presence of such differences is interesting, and their frequency a matter which, although my performance was not intended as a prediction of that of Ginsberg or any other reader, might call into question the level of detail that may practically be attempted in any such attempt - at least on the

[44]See Chapter 3, section 3.

grounds set out here. They may reflect the different expressive priorities of each reading, or differences in dialect, performing skill, or other areas between the readers themselves. However, they are, following Cruttenden, of less significance than the selection of a rise for a fall, or vice-versa. It is the proportion of such differences, particularly among the nuclei, that may be a better indication of the value of tone analysis.

This proportion is much more encouraging. On only 6 of the 25 shared nuclei - 8 of the 35 shared accents - is this kind of major difference between the performances present: approximately 24% and 23%, respectively. Furthermore, such a number of differences permits a manageable discussion, and one which may cast light on the poem. Among the nuclei, underlined for ease of reference, these inter-group differences are as follows:

AG reading:	My reading:	
/ `As a `Buddha /	/ `As a ˇBuddha /	(l. 3)
/ that `all the `sounds /	/ that `all the ˇsounds /	(l. 5)
/ in `Isles of ´Blest	/ in `Isles of `Blest	(l. 9)
/ in `Nectar ´Soup /	in >Nectar `Soup /	(l. 11)
/ and `all the `odors /	/ and all the ˇodors /	(l. 12)
/ and `all the `thoughts /	/ and all the ˇthoughts /	(l. 19)

These differences are, naturally, of two sorts; those where Ginsberg selects a fall, as against my rise, and vice versa. Of the six cases, four are of the first kind - the nuclei in ll. 3, 5, 12 and 19. At each of these points, all of which occurs in a high-key intonation group, I had selected a rise - more precisely, a fall-rise - to signal that the intonational structure was incomplete - that there was 'more to come'. It can be conjectured that

Ginsberg's reading is again less preoccupied with signalling discourse structure at these points than is mine, or that he is signalling it using other means not notated here. Elsewhere, the two readings seem to differ in their interpretation of this structure; where Ginsberg selects a rise, in ll. 9 and 11, at points where I select a fall, his performance has chosen to emphasise that the lines in question form part of an incomplete intonational and discoursal structure - which they certainly do - while mine has chosen to emphasise the smaller structures which they close.

3 CONCLUSION

Although only a small number of poems from *Mexico City Blues* have been discussed, some observations can be made about the role played by sound in the collection in the construction of poetic form. Despite this chapter's concentration on intonation, some insight into rhythm has been obtained. The collection draws the reader's and listener's attention to patterns of accent distribution familiar from conversation and narration, highlighting their rhythmic potential, and, where the patterns approximate metre, a further level of interest is added.

The cues that direct readers towards intonation are principally those of lineation and indentation. The frequent equivalence of the printed line with a single intonation group encourages the belief that lineation, in Kerouac's work, is not simply a conventional means to mark a text as poetic, but is designed to foreground patterns of sound. This belief, if acted upon in performance, allows the line to function as a perceptually strong unit of form, patterning the linguistic material of the poems in groups that have a phonetic equivalence despite rhythmic and syntactic disparities. Exclusively intonation-based patterning of this kind is unique to

nonmetrical poetry, although not all such poetry makes use of it. Its importance to *Mexico City Blues* is unmistakable.

Many of the intonational effects that have been described have a semantic function, although this function can be of different kinds.[45] It can be directly affective, as in Kerouac's own performance of the 221st Chorus, where the line 'the gleaming happiness' is given high key. It can also combine affective with iconic functions. One example is the lineation-cued extension of paratone beyond the point indicated by syntax and semantics, which, in the 80th Chorus, creates a feeling of slight disorientation comparable to that which can be evoked by the kind of jazz solo which the poem describe. Another is the repeated use of high key in the 221st Chorus's evocation of Deadbelly. The repetition is directly expressive of Deadbelly's relative inarticulacy; the slight mismatch between key and indentation evokes similar associations, but less directly.

However, the more distinctive, and perhaps the richer example of intonation in poetic form is provided by the pattern of tonal movements present in the 182nd Chorus. This pattern is not recuperable in semantic terms. Its two principal features are the recurrence of a single motif - the move from rise to fall - with variations in the realisation of that motif, and the presence of a very lengthy minor paratone, within which successive nuclei are likely to exhibit a gradual decline in pitch height, creating a 'stepping' pattern more usually present within a single intonation group. These devices have an effect on the perception of the poem as a whole - giving it cohesion - and, in the repeated deferral of the close of the minor paratone, a certain tension. However, they also create a pattern of tonal movements which can be recalled independently of the language of the

---

[45]Of the terms used in this discussion, several are taken from Chapter 9 of *REP*, which discusses the functions of metre. A distinction is proposed between semantic and nonsemantic functions of metre, with 'iconic' and 'affective' varieties two among several associated with semantic functions (pp. 286, 287-95, 295-300).

poem, much in the way that the tune of a song can be hummed without reference to the words; in both cases, the pattern will carry the associations acquired in its original context, but may be appreciated for its abstract qualities.

The description of such effects does not in itself refute the objections that may be raised to the analysis of intonation in poetry. One is that of superfluity. If it is the case that the effects described in this chapter could be adequately described without having recourse to intonation, then that recourse is unnecessary. This is a larger question than can be dealt with here, and is returned to in the general Conclusion that follows. The second is that of the relationship between text and performance: as Chapter 1 noted, it has been suggested that intonation is so much a property of individual readings that to associate it with a printed poem is unreasonable. The use of recordings in this chapter was intended to test that assumption. My performances were not identical to those of Kerouac and Ginsberg, yet there were many similarities. The comparison of my tonal movements in the 182nd Chorus with those of Allen Ginsberg suggested that a precise analysis may indeed be very difficult, but that one pitched at the right level of generality - in this case, dividing all tonal movements into the two categories suggested by Alan Cruttenden - might succeed. I have described the motif of that poem as a pattern of a rise followed by fall. My own preference for fall-rise, rather than rise, was only partially shared by Ginsberg; the simpler description conveys what the two readings had in common, and permits the basis of the patterning to be described.

Conclusion

If preceding chapters do not permit generalisations that would be applicable to all the poems and poets grouped together by the label *nonmetrical poetry*, they have at least illustrated some of the techniques on which such poets can draw. Between them, *The Tempers*, *Cosmopolitan Greetings* and *Mexico City Blues* represent a range of different styles. Williams's experiments at the edges of metre, and the rhythmic and intonational explorations of Ginsberg and Kerouac, are sufficiently diverse that some level of speculation is possible concerning the broader potential of these techniques. The chapters devoted to them also permit the method and model of nonmetrical prosody sketched in Sections 1 and 2 to be assessed; again, the poets do not provide an exhaustive testing-ground but, again, some conclusions may be drawn.

1 THE METHOD

The thesis has drawn on a variety of analytic techniques and resources, drawn, notably, from phonetics, Focus-to-Accent phonology, corpus linguistics, *REP* metrics and literary history. It has also sought to give these techniques a firm theoretical foundation. This approach was adopted in the hope of, in some sense, covering all angles, and permitting a meaningful prosodic response to any text that might be considered as nonmetrical poetry. That response would in many cases need to be provisional, and might be qualified by a lack of resources, of knowledge, or simply of imaginative sympathy, yet it would at least be expressed in a way that moved beyond the statement of a purely subjective response, and that would be as well founded as possible in phonetic and linguistic knowledge.

The success or failure of this approach rests in its contributions to three critical goals: those of notation and prediction, to which much of the early discussion within the thesis was devoted, and interpretation, broadly defined.

A) NOTATION

Many notational marks have been used in this thesis: different typefaces for different kinds of syllabic prominence, diacritical marks for tonal movements, letters and characters for the distribution of intonation groups, and their combination in larger intonational units, and the symbols proposed by Derek Attridge for the beats and offbeats of which metre consists. This variety of marks has permitted different perceptual phenomena to be kept distinct, as a given syllable can be notated differently depending on whether its prominence, its tonal movement or its cueing of a beat is considered of importance. Description of the many different formal resources found in the poets studied has thus been able to proceed on the basis of resource-specific scansions.

The phonetic orientation of these notations has had several consequences, some of which correspond to the hopes expressed in Chapter 2. They have been applied on the basis of perceived poetic effect, rather than total linguistic structure, a fact which contributes to the relative efficiency of the scansions used. This approach has also, it is hoped, avoided a 'notation-first' approach to commentary; with the arguable exception of the metrical symbols, the signs used do not themselves suggest the presence of underlying structures in the language of a poem, in contrast to some of those which might be derived from phonology. By focusing on phonetic realisation, new ways of describing nonmetrical poetry have been found. One of these is paratone: the discussion of Allen

Ginsberg's 'Improvisation in Beijing', among other poems, was able to describe a formal principle that is of some significance to the success or failure of the poem, yet which phonological accounts of English ignore. It was also able to draw a contrast between the phonetic diversity achievable through paratone, and the relative monotony of the poetry's syntax, thus enhancing the account of the poetic effect of paratone, but also pointing to the risks that adhere to any use of it as a compositional principle.

This thesis has also contained an extensive application to nonmetrical poetry of the metrical symbols used by Derek Attridge. Their value to discussions of the form was illustrated in Chapter 5. In many of the poems contained in Williams's *The Tempers*, prominence distribution is irregular, yet a metre can be discerned. An approach that distinguishes between prominence and beat is necessary for the description of such poems; that of Attridge enabled clear scansions and commentaries to be made.

The notations used in this thesis could certainly be improved upon. The scansion of non-pitch prominences remains slightly arbitrary; the account of tonal movements is dependent on descriptions that, while based in auditory response, schematise that response to a greater extent than is the case in other areas. Nonetheless, they provide a greater variety and precision than has previously been available to nonmetrical scansion.

B) PREDICTION

The association of scansions with texts in this thesis has been performance-based, with the attempt being made to take account of both linguistic and pragmatic influences. The aim of this approach, as discussed in Chapter 2, was to avoid making claims to objectivity, while reducing the risk that scansions would be subjective to a degree that prevented useful discussion. Among the tools suggested for use in this approach were Focus-to-Accent

phonology, corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, metrical realisation rules and the resources of literary history. The first of these was in some ways the most important. In postulating personal preference and interpretation as a motive for focus assignment, and in providing a set of descriptive and explanatory tools for the typical means by which focus is reflected in accent placement, it helped scansion to be aware of its own preferences and motives, and to explain those which might operate in other interpretations and performances. In this, support was obtained from all of the resources described.

Corpus linguistics provided evidence of characteristic speech behaviour, against which scansions could be compared. Part of its value was diffuse, in that a familiarity with corpora and corpus studies is likely to sharpen prosodic intuitions. However, there were points at which a reference to the field was a direct aid to scansion. An example of this was the use made, in discussing *Mexico City Blues*, of the finding that, among grammatical units smaller than the clause, noun-phrase subjects are particularly likely to be assigned a whole intonation group. Where Kerouac's lines are not whole clauses, they consist frequently of such units, and so the corpus finding enabled the intonational autonomy of the line in *Mexico City Blues* to be asserted. This, in turn, allowed suggestions to be made about the overall importance of oral performance to the volume.

Discourse analysis provided the concepts of direct and oblique orientation, whose performative consequences are those associated with the 'conversational' and 'reading' prosodic styles respectively. This pair of terms was an important component of the chapter devoted to *Cosmopolitan Greetings*, allowing the different challenges which some of Ginsberg's poems present to the reader - challenges of subject matter and tone, and challenges of intonational rendition - to be linked in analysis. As noted above, features such as paratone will not always emerge from performance;

the concept of direct orientation permits a succinct statement of the conditions that are necessary to such an emergence.

The metrical realisation rules set out in *REP* and the literary-historical resources proposed in this thesis derive from different critical modes, but there is no reason why they should not prove complementary if used together. This proved to be the case in Chapter 5's discussion of 'Postlude', by William Carlos Williams. The realisation rules were used as a guide to the likely performance difficulty of the two readings described, metrical and nonmetrical. Literary history allowed the different implications of each to be described: the contemporary association between nonmetre and classical subjects, and the possibility that later readers, aware of Williams's subsequent development, would be inclined to interpret any rhythmically ambiguous text by him as nonmetrical; the relationship of a metrical performance to Williams's experiments with offbeat distribution, and the influence of popular song. The discussion of 'Postlude' was decided in favour of a metrical reading, principally on the grounds of aesthetics and authorial intention. Neither of these methods of closing debate are universally suitable, and, indeed, debates do not always need to be closed. An explicit use of the methods proposed, placing both readings in a broader context, allows the moment and motives of any such closure to be made clear.

Finally, recorded readings, whose use as an aid to prediction under certain circumstances was proposed in Chapter 2, were not so used in later chapters. Instead, performances of *Mexico City Blues* by Kerouac and by Allen Ginsberg were appealed to as methods of verification. A comparison of my placement of nuclear tonal movements with those employed by Allen Ginsberg suggested the level of generality at which intonation prediction in prosody might usefully be attempted.

This thesis has argued that the scansion of nonmetrical poetry should seek to avoid both the simple subjective response, and the reading that is distorted by a broader argument which it is intended to support. The resources proposed cannot protect against these aspects of critical method. Nonetheless, they can make explicit the point at which they become decisive.

The emphasis on performance has a further advantage, which is less theoretically grounded, but perhaps finally more important: it allows consideration of the performer's aesthetic judgement. An account of a poem's form that, as with 'Postlude' describes the decisions that may be made by the reader as s/he reads and rehearses a text, and attempts to reconcile potential formal conflicts between its different parts, or with the poem's other communicative needs, may find a way to say something of lasting interest.

C) INTERPRETATION

Prosody leads into interpretation, as well as incorporating it, describing patterns of sound that are thought to have interesting consequences for poetry. One test of the model set out in this thesis is how well it permits discussion of those consequences.

In *REP*, Derek Attridge distinguishes between two broad categories of formal effect: semantic and nonsemantic. Although *REP*'s discussion is focused on metre, the categories reflect a wider conception of how artistic form may be important, and may easily be applied to discussions of nonmetrical poetry. Among nonsemantic effects described in the readings were the pattern of intonational motifs noted in the 182nd Chorus of *Mexico City Blues* ('The Essence of Existence'), which were found to create a complex, aesthetically striking structure. Semantic effects

included the role of groups of pitch accents in Allen Ginsberg's 'On the Cremation of Chögyam Trungpa, Vidyadhara', which created vertical links between syntactically separated items, and were likely to play an important role in any broader interpretation of the poem's meanings.

Although both kinds of effects were described, semantic effects were considerably more frequent. The discussion of Allen Ginsberg, in particular, was heavily geared toward the expressive and rhetorical devices found in *Cosmopolitan Greetings*, while that of *The Tempers* included perhaps only one genuinely nonsemantic effect: the possibilities of repetition and variation created by the two-beat metre. This means that an approach which seeks to describe nonmetrical prosody as comprehensively as possible has found extremely few effects within wholly nonmetrical poems whose destiny in performance and interpretation does not appear to be that of semantic recuperation.

It is difficult to establish why this should be so. It may be ascribable to nonmetricality itself, or to the particular poets discussed; this possibility is considered below. It may result from the relative ease with which semantic functions are described, or from a personal lack of insight into nonsemantic aspects of form. On the other hand, it may result from failures within the model and method adopted. It is possible, for example, that a concentration on detail prevents broader patterns from being perceived, or that the *REP* model of metre suggests too great a distinction between the analysis of metrical and nonmetrical rhythms. It is likely that only an application of the model to more poets, and by a variety of readers, could establish whether these are real difficulties.

2 THE POETRY

Conclusions about *The Tempers*, *Cosmopolitan Greetings* and *Mexico City Blues* having been suggested in the respective chapters, no further observations will be offered here. Instead, this discussion will concentrate on the different forms which have been described. They are considered under the three headings of metre, rhythm and intonation.

A) METRE

Metre played a significant role in all three collections. Two poems were shown to be metrical, or potentially metrical, throughout: Williams's 'Postlude', and Kerouac's 80th Chorus ('Goofing at the Table'). Others contained metrical lines, groups of lines, or even part-lines. The uses to which the three collections put metre raise some questions of definition, which are discussed in the next section. More importantly, they illustrate the variety of techniques on which ostensibly nonmetrical poetry may draw.

The most straightforwardly metrical poem was 'Postlude'. To arrive at a metrical performance of this poem, which asks that readers extend their tolerance of metrical complexity beyond what is usual, is slightly difficult, as is illustrated by its having previously been considered an example of free verse. Once this difficulty is overcome, the metre works very well, and may be the poem's most successful element. There is no single metre in 'Postlude'; different stanzas make use of four-beat, two-beat and three-beat patterns, and one passage is dipodic. All of the metres used, however, are suggestive of a four-beat underlying rhythm. In this extremely varied realisation of a stable rhythmic base, and in its use of short lines which, particularly in the two-beat section, do not deviate too far from the rhythms

of speech, even as they vary from those of much metrical verse, the poem enables a complex, but satisfying form to be experienced.

Kerouac's 80th Chorus has a different relationship to metre. Its rhythms are very believably those of two speakers, each with a good ear for rhythm and a playful attitude to its use, collaborating in the pleasures of conversation. These speech rhythms constitute the basis of the poem's use of form. In these circumstances, metre is an option, an add-on which the reader of the poem may, by timing prominences carefully, choose to build into performance. If done well, this adds unity and complexity to the poem; if done badly, the speech rhythms will suffer. However, the borderline between successful metrical and nonmetrical readings of this poem may be thin. Even if the prominences are not timed so as to allow a four-beat rhythm to be felt, their strength, and their relatively regular spacing, are likely to suggest to the reader or listener that some formal principle, however diffuse, is at work.

Other poems built a form that played metre against nonmetre. None adopted the style known as 'ghost metre', where a poem moves in and out of a single metrical pattern. This is perhaps because the style is best suited to the iambic pentameter, as exemplified by the work of T.S. Eliot. For none of these poets is the pentameter the most important metre; use is more frequently made of patterns based on a four-beat underlying rhythm.

The poem which most closely approaches ghost metre is Williams's 'Contemporania', which uses a two-beat metre almost throughout; the final lines see a shift into nonmetre. The two-beat is used very subtly, and is well suited to the poem's dramatisation of a speech and a poetics that are simple but not naive; the move into nonmetre is mildly disorientating for reader and listener, a feeling which the argument of the poem recuperates into its meaning. This use of metre is distinctive, in that there is only a

single point of contact between metre and nonmetre: the poem is metrical, and then it is not.

A very different use of metre, but one equally distant from the 'ghost metre' paradigm, characterises some of the poems by Allen Ginsberg discussed in Chapter 6. 'Personals Column' and 'Who Eats Who?' contain a high proportion of lines in which prominence distribution is sufficiently regular that beats, and thus a metre, are likely to be inferred. In many cases, the same metre is repeated in subsequent lines, ceasing when a sequence of prominences is such that it can no longer be sustained. The prominence pattern which effects this change may suggest a different metre, or may be nonmetrical; in either case, the contrast to the metre which it supplants is frequently very suggestive. 'Who Eats Who?', for example, uses such contrasts to suggest the abstract pleasures of a shifting figure-ground relationship, while 'Personals Column' uses them to expressive ends, as the speaking voice gains in, and loses, assurance. These poems use metre line by line, or group of lines by group of lines; in them, metre is a resource among others, rather than a pervasive formal principle.

B) RHYTHM

Chapter 3 drew a distinction between two possible definitions of *rhythm* in a poetic context. One was based in psychology, referring to the inference of a pattern of beats from heard or imagined phonetic phenomena. The other referred to the phonetic phenomena themselves, upon which it was suggested that the forms of nonmetrical poetry might rely rather more.

This has not been found to be the case. In part, this is to do with the descriptive power of the *REP* model of metre, which permits consideration of the full range of ways in which phonetic phenomena cue a psychological

response. The poems and lines discussed in the previous section demonstrate the way in which stretches of language which another model of metre might consider nonmetrical can be shown, nonetheless, to contain sufficient cues that a metre may be inferred. This is true even below the level of the line, as is illustrated by the repeated group of three accents which, in Ginsberg's 'On the Cremation of Chögyam Trungpa, Vidyadhara', create a semantic connection between phrases in different lines. In the first instance, these groups are patterns of more and less prominent syllables; but the internal structure of those patterns will cause them to be interpreted as a sequence of beats and offbeats.

All of the poets discussed incorporate the phonetic detail of prominences into their metrical patterns; an example is the way in which the third stanza of 'Postlude' shifts from a two-beat to three-beat metrical pattern through the replacement, in mid-line, of items likely to be accorded a non-pitch prominence by those which need to be assigned an accent. All also make use of passages of nonmetrical language; part of the subtlety of 'Personals Ad' lies in its use of nonmetrical lines amid those that realise one or another metre. However, only Ginsberg, of the three, makes syllabic prominences, and not the beats which may be inferred from them, the basis of a poem's form.

Ginsberg does this in those long-line poems, like 'On the Cremation of Chögyam Trungpa, Vidyadhara', in which pitch accents are recurrent, but in which relatively few of the metrical hypotheses that the listener might attempt will be rewarded. There are certainly metrical passages in these poems, but some of them may consist of only three beats, and very few cohere sufficiently to suggest an underlying formal principle. In consequence, where metre is present, it seems fortuitous, a by-product of the repeated pitch accents which are the poem's only prosodic constant, and which are likely to be experienced as its principal element of form. As

Chapter 6 noted, this is an uncertain device upon which to construct a poem. Accent's direct derivation from focus placement demands, in such cases, repeated renewal of interest from both speaker and listener; there is no semantically neutral formal principle to which their recurrence can be ascribed. The burden of communication, concentrated to such an extent in a single phonetic feature, may become difficult to sustain.

Several factors may explain why, of the three poets studied, none but Ginsberg made significant use of nonmetrical rhythm. One may be the choice of poets; another may be the preferences of the reader. However, it seems more likely that more profound reasons exist. The mind's tendency to infer metre is very strong: any sequence of more and less prominent syllables that displays an approximately alternating pattern may be interpreted as the realisation of an underlying rhythm. As Williams shows, a diction and syntax inherited from Romanticism are very apt to fall into patterns that elicit this response; as Kerouac shows, contemporary speech rhythms, too, may be interpreted as patterns of beats. This leaves little space for 'rhythms-without-metre' to flourish.

However nonmetricality is defined, it is clear that, if a beat-based model of metre is adopted, very few nonmetrical poems of the sorts described in this thesis are likely to be entirely free of metre. However, it must be noted that one important style of nonmetrical poetry has not been explored: that which makes systematic use of enjambment. As the few examples found in *The Tempers* illustrate, enjambment, particularly in a short-line context, is an extremely effective way to obstruct the metrical response of readers, and, in turn, of listeners. To establish what is left once this is achieved would require a separate study.

C) INTONATION

Of the intonational features described earlier in the thesis, all were found to have a potential role in poetic form. It was suggested that paratone might be an important tool in the description of Ginsberg's long line, as well as in some of the poems by Kerouac that sought a speech equivalent of the jazz solo. Kerouac's work was also shown to make use of the intonation group, of key and of tonal movements in constructing form, with the patterns created by tonal movements of particular interest; examples cited earlier in the thesis, including a poem by Muriel Rukeyser discussed in Chapter 3, suggested that such patterns might be of considerable importance to nonmetrical poetry. It was also found, on the basis of a comparison with recorded readings, that the connection between text and performance in respect of intonation is less variable than is sometimes suggested.

In contrast to earlier sections of this conclusion, these findings cannot be compared with those embodied in existing prosodic assumptions, since intonational terminology is not a standard element of prosodic criticism; it may instead be asked whether it should become such an element. The discussions contained in this thesis are not decisive in this respect. The value of intonational analysis would need to be demonstrated in discussions of a range of poets, writing in a variety of styles. In the longer term, the question raised at the end of Chapter 7 would also need to be answered. Is intonation an autonomous aspect of poetic form, or is the use of terms such as *paratone* and *fall-rise* a way of describing other features - such as meaning, or discourse structure - that it would be better to address directly?

Patterns of tonal movements, such as that found in the 182nd Chorus from *Mexico City Blues*, are likely to be the crux of any attempt to answer that question. On the one hand, their formal consequences appear to be of a sort lacking in most descriptions of nonmetrical poetry, including those

contained in this thesis: elegant, nonsemantic, aesthetically satisfying. These are not the only functions which poetic form may play, but they are important ones, and notoriously hard to describe. On the other, the tonal movements are particularly vulnerable to being seen as manifestations of a deeper set of patterns, most probably those described by phrasal and informational analysis. Phrasal analysis, notably as practised by Richard Cureton, seeks to describe patterns which may, like those of tonal movement, extend over a whole poem, although whose effects are felt locally. Moreover, the patterns which it describes undoubtedly have an influence on intonational realisation, as is illustrated by the fact that some of its central concepts, such as those of 'arrival' and 'anticipation' were drawn on in Chapter 7's discussions. Any final incorporation of intonation into prosody is therefore likely to require a close comparison of phrasal and intonational methods of analysis.

3 DEFINING NONMETRICAL POETRY

The readings undertaken in Part Three permit some observations to be made concerning the definition of the category *nonmetrical poetry*. They are not proposed as the most important element of this Conclusion, despite occurring towards its end. The goal of the thesis has been to understand and to describe nonmetrical poetry, with its precise definition a subsidiary concern.

The working definitions given in the Introduction can be recalled:

Working definitions:

Nonmetrical language is language in which beats are not experienced.

Nonmetrical poetry is poetry made up, in whole or in part, of nonmetrical language.

It was suggested that two aspects of these definitions might benefit from revision. One was the statement that nonmetrical poetry is made up of nonmetrical language 'in whole or in part', a specification which would cause all poems with a single nonmetrical line to be considered nonmetrical, and perhaps cause the nature of such poems to be misrepresented. The second, and the more difficult, was the association between text and performance, which was felt to be potentially less straightforward than was allowed for in the terms of the definition. Both of these aspects can now be considered in the light of the work carried out in the thesis.

A) 'IN WHOLE OR IN PART'

Although works by Williams and Ginsberg exemplified the unequal distribution of metrical and nonmetrical passages that had been anticipated, this aspect of the definition proved more advantage than disadvantage. Ginsberg's 'Who Eats Who?' and 'Personals Ad' include very few nonmetrical lines amid the different metres used. The availability of the term *nonmetrical poetry* enables such poems to be distinguished from the irregular ode, a purely metrical assortment. Williams's 'Contemporania', on the other hand, is metrical throughout, apart from a final shift into nonmetre. It is true that metre is likely to be felt as the dominant element in any reading of this poem, and that the shift into nonmetre is significant in large measure because of this. To call the poem nonmetrical reflects, nonetheless, the fact that this shift into nonmetre remains, from the point of view of rhythm, the poem's most distinctive feature. On the evidence of the poems studied, therefore, this aspect of the definitions does not need revision.

B) TEXT AND PERFORMANCE

The poem which raised the most difficult questions about the importance of performance to the categories *metrical* and *nonmetrical* was Williams's 'Postlude', for which two different readings could be proposed. A possible performative history for the poem was sketched, noting the readerships for whom it was more likely to be metrical, and those for whom it was more likely to be nonmetrical, and criteria were discussed which might lead to one or the other performance being preferred.

Such an approach suggests that metricality is a property of performances, not poems, with a poem being described as metrical only when the emergence of a metre in its performance was assured. This assumption contrasts with the traditional ideas of metre, which is, in Wimsatt and Beardsley's phrase, 'always there'; it also contrasts with the working definitions adopted in this thesis, in which metricality and nonmetricality were presented as properties of language.

These contrasts suggest that definitions of metre and nonmetre may indeed need to be refined, if they are to be used consistently, and if all types of poetry are to be accurately described. One possibility is to accept that the terms be considered, as in Chapter 5, as descriptions of properties of performances, and not of poems; if applied directly to poems, an assessment would be implied of the probability of the performance indicated. Metrical poetry would be poetry which is extremely likely to be given a metrical performance; nonmetrical poetry, that which was extremely unlikely to get such a performance. A third category could be proposed for *potentially metrical* poetry, and include poems such as 'Postlude', or Kerouac's 80th Chorus. Another possibility would be to use metrical rules, such as those of *REP*, aggressively, such that poems falling outside them would be considered nonmetrical, however they were performed. Neither approach seems satisfactory.

A better approach might be to consider metricality and nonmetricality as properties of performances and poems alike, and to allow, where necessary, for explicit reference to be made to the terms on which they are assigned to a particular poem. The method used in Chapter 5, whereby an audience is specified, may be the best way of achieving this; the audience may be historically defined, may be that which an individual prosodist considers that s/he represents, or may simply be characterised in terms of hypothetical preferences for one or another reading. Such a method has the further advantage of not always being necessary, with audience specification being used only in cases where ambiguity is felt to be present.

Before proposing a revised version of the working definitions, one final refinement may be suggested. This is the replacement of the statement that beats are *experienced* by one to the effect that they are *inferred*; this may better reflect the psychological processes involved.

Final definitions:

Nonmetrical language is language from which (when read by a specified person or member of a specified group) beats are not inferred.

Nonmetrical poetry is poetry made up, in whole or in part, of nonmetrical language.

The parentheses denote the fact that the audience specification is optional.

Appendix
Notations and Metrical Realisation Rules

1 PHONETIC NOTATIONS

A) RHYTHM

nonmetrical:	pitch prominence
nonmEtrical:	nucleus
nonme̲trical:	non-pitch prominence

B) INTONATION

non`metrical:	high fall
non‑metrical:	low fall
non^metrical:	rise-fall
non´metrical:	high rise
non‐metrical:	low rise
non˘metrical:	fall-rise
non>metrical:	mid level
non¯metrical:	high level
non_metrical:	low level
'nonmetrical:	pre-nuclear accent (movement unspecified)
/ :	intonation group boundary
h:	high key
m:	mid key
l:	low key
[H]:	beginning of major paratone
[M]:	beginning of mid-onset minor paratone
[L]:	beginning of low-onset minor paratone

2 METRICAL NOTATIONS

With three exceptions, these notations, and the realisation rules that follow, are taken from Derek Attridge, *The Rhythms of English Poetry* (London: Longman, 1982; hereafter *REP*).

A) SCANSION

The following notations are taken from *REP*:

B̲:	beat
B̄:	beat with promotion
[B]:	unrealised beat
o:	offbeat
o̗:	offbeat with demotion
o̯:	double offbeat
o̗̯, o̗̯, o̗̯:	double offbeat with demotion in first, second or both associated syllables
o̯̽:	triple offbeat
ô:	implied offbeat

Others have been adapted from the *REP* style for use in this thesis. The patterns to which they refer are not recognised by the *REP* model:

o̯̗̽:	triple offbeat with two demotions
o̯̯:	quadruple offbeat
o̯̯̗:	quadruple offbeat with demotion

B) METRICAL PATTERNS

REP combines notations from the following list to describe the metrical pattern of single lines:

B:	beat
o:	offbeat
(o):	optional offbeat: neutral preference
‹o›:	optional offbeat: preference for inclusion
((o)):	optional offbeat: preference for omission
[B]:	unrealised beat
([B]):	optional unrealised beat

For example, the metre of a five-beat line in which feminine endings are optional, but rare, may be notated as oBoBoBoBoB((o)), or o5B((o)).

C) STANZAIC FORMS

Stanzaic forms are notated as combinations of metrical patterns. The number of realised beats per line is given, with lines separated by points. For example, the metre traditionally known as *long metre* is notated as 4.4.4.4; the ballad stanza, in which even-numbered lines end with an unrealised beat, as 4.3.4.3.

3 METRICAL RULES

Two sets of metrical realisation rules are given in *REP*, dealing with duple and triple metres respectively. Within them, the later the rule, or option within a rule, the more complex the resulting line will tend to be.[1]

The pairing conditions which constrain the application of these rules to accentual-syllabic verse are not listed.

A) RULES FOR DUPLE METRE

i) Base rules

(1) *Beat rule*

A stressed syllable may realise a beat.

(2) *Offbeat rule*

One (or two) unstressed syllables may realise an offbeat.

ii) Deviation rules

(3) *Promotion rule*

---

[1] *REP*, p. 358.

An unstressed syllable may realise a beat when it occurs between two unstressed syllables, or with a line boundary on one side and an unstressed syllable on the other.

(4) *Demotion rule*

A stressed syllable may realise an offbeat when it occurs between two stressed syllables, or after a line-boundary and before a stressed syllable.

(5) *Implied offbeat rule*

An offbeat may be implied between two stressed syllables.

B) RULES FOR TRIPLE METRE

i) Base rules

(1) *Beat rule*: as for duple metre.

(2) *Offbeat rule*

Strict triple metre

Two unstressed syllables may realise an offbeat

Free triple metre

Two unstressed syllables (or one) may realise an offbeat

ii) Deviation rules

(3) *Promotion rule*: as for duple metre

(4) *Demotion rule*

A stressed syllable, or an unstressed syllable and a stressed syllable (in either order), or two stressed syllables, may realise an offbeat between two stresses, or after a line-boundary and before a stress.

Bibliography

This bibliography is divided into different subject areas. Some works could have appeared in more than one; several studies of William Carlos Williams, for example, are also studies of poetic form. In general, works are placed in the category which best corresponds to the use that has been made of them.

1 POETIC FORM

Abercrombie, David, 'A Phonetician's View of Verse Structure', *Linguistics*, 6 (1964), 5-13

Addison, Catherine, 'Once Upon A Time: A Reader-Response Approach to Prosody', *College English*, 56 (1994), 655-78

Aldington, Richard, 'Free Verse in England', *Egoist*, 1 (1914), 351-52

Allen, Gay Wilson, *American Prosody* (New York: American Book Company, 1935)

Attridge, Derek, 'A Note on Richard Cureton's Response', *Poetics Today*, 17 (1996), 51-54

--- , 'Beyond Metrics: Richard Cureton's Rhythmic Phrasing in English Verse', Poetics Today, 17 (1996), 9-27

--- , 'Linguistics and Poetics Revisited: Response', *Versification: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Literary Prosody*, 2 (1998), <http//sizcol.u-shizuoka-ken.ac.jp/versif/97MLAResponse_Attridge. html>

--- , 'Linguistic Theory and Literary Criticism: *The Rhythms of English Poetry* Revisited', in Kiparsky and Youmans, pp. 183-99

--- , *Poetic Rhythm: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

--- , 'Poetry Unbound? Observations on Free Verse', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 73 (1987), 353-74

--- , *The Rhythms of English Poetry* (London: Longman, 1982)

Avi-ram, Amitai, 'Free Verse in Whitman and Ginsberg: The Body and the Simulacrum', in *The Continuing Presence of Walt Whitman: The Life After the Life*, ed. by Robert K. Martin (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992), pp. 93-113

Aviram, Amittai F., *Telling Rhythm: Body and Meaning in Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994)

Barney, Tom, 'A Response to Richard Cureton's *Rhythm and Verse Study*', *Language and Literature*, 4 (1995), 49-54

--- , 'Phonetics and the Empirical Study of Poetry', in *Empirical Approaches to Literature and Aesthetics*, ed. by Roger J. Kreuz and Mary Sue MacNealy (Norwood: Ablex, 1996), 309-28

Beasley, Paul, 'Vive la différence! Performance Poetry', *Critical Quarterly*, 38 (1996), 28-38

Bennett, Joseph, 'The Lyre and the Sledgehammer', *Hudson Review*, 5 (1952), 295-307

Bernstein, Charles, ed. *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Berry, Eleanor, 'The Free Verse Spectrum', *College English*, 59 (1997), 873-97

--- , 'Visual Poetry', in Preminger and Brogan, pp. 1364-66

--- , 'William Carlos Williams' Triadic-Line Verse: An Analysis of Its Prosody', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 35 (1989), 364-88

--- , 'Williams' Development of a New Prosodic Form - *Not* the "Variable Foot", but the "Sight-Stanza"', *William Carlos Williams Review*, 7 (1981), 21-30

Bjorklund, Beth, 'Form, Anti-Form, and Informality: Reinventing Free Verse', *Poetics Today*, 16 (1995), 547-67

--- , 'Klopstock's Poetic Innovations: The Emergence of German as a Prosodic Language', *The Germanic Review*, 56 (1981), 20-27

Bollobas, Eniko, *Tradition and Innovation in American Free Verse: Whitman to Duncan* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986)

Booth, Mark W., *The Experience of Songs* (New Haven: Yale University Press,1981)

Bowering, George, 'The New American Prosody: A Look at the Problem of Notating "Free" Verse', *Kulchur*, 4 (1964), 3-15

Bradford, Richard, *Silence and Sound: Theories of Poetics from the Eighteenth Century* (London: Associated University Presses, 1992)

--- , *Stylistics* (London: Routledge, 1997)

--- , *The Look of It: A Theory of Visual Form in English Poetry* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1993)

Bratton, J.S., *The Victorian Popular Ballad* (London: Macmillan, 1975)

Bridges, Robert, *Milton's Prosody, with a Chapter on Accentual Verse & Notes*, rev. final edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921)

Brogan, T.V.F., *English Versification, 1570-1980: A Reference Guide with a Global Appendix* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981)

--- , 'Meter', in Preminger and Brogan, pp. 768-83

--- , *Verseform: A Comparative Bibliography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989)

Brooks, Cleanth, and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry*, 3rd edn (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960)

Byers, Prudence P., 'A Formula for Poetic Intonation', *Poetics*, 8 (1979), 367-80

--- , 'Intonation Prediction and the Sound of Poetry', *Language and Style*, 13 (1980), 3-14

--- , 'The Auditory Reality of the Verse Line', *Style*, 17 (1983), 27-36

Cable, Thomas, 'Timers, Stressers, and Linguists: Contention and Compromise', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 33 (1972), 227-39

Chatman, Seymour, *A Theory of Meter* (The Hague: Mouton, 1965)

--- , 'Robert Frost's "Mowing": An Inquiry into Prosodic Structure', *Kenyon Review*, 18 (1956), 421-38

Conrad, Philip, 'Visual Poetry', *Poetry*, 32 (1928), 112-14

Cooper, G. Burns, *Mysterious Music: Rhythm and Free Verse* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998)

Crombie, Winifred, *Free Verse and Prose Style: An Operational Definition and Description* (London: Croom Helm, 1987)

Crystal, David, 'Intonation and Metrical Theory', in *The English Tone of Voice: Essays in Intonation, Prosody and Paralanguage* (London: Edward Arnold, 1975), pp. 105-24 (first publ. in *Transactions of the Philological Society: 1971* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1973), 1-33)

Cureton, Richard D., 'A Response to Derek Attridge', *Poetics Today*, 17 (1996), 29-50

--- , 'A Response to Tom Barney', *Language and Literature*, 4 (1995), 55-59

--- , 'Rethinking Holder', *Language and Literature*, 7 (1998), 51-63

--- , 'Rhythm and Verse Study', *Language and Literature*, 3 (1994), 105-24

--- , *Rhythmic Phrasing in English Verse* (London: Longman, 1992)

Cushman, Stephen, *William Carlos Williams and the Meanings of Measure* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985)

Davie, Donald, 'Two Ways Out of Whitman', in *The Poet in the Imaginary Museum: Essays of Two Decades*, ed. by Barry Alpert (Manchester: Carcanet, 1977), pp. 132-36

Drucker, Johanna, 'Visual Performance of the Poetic Text', in Bernstein, pp. 131-61

Eliot, T.S., *Dante* (London: Faber and Faber, 1929; repr. 1965)

--- , 'Reflections on Vers Libre', *New Statesman*, 3 March 1917, pp. 518-19 (repr. in *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. by Frank Kermode (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), pp. 31-36)

Finch, Annie, 'Limping Prosody: A Review of *Rethinking Meter: A New Approach to the Verse Line* by Alan Holder', *Versification: An*

Interdisciplinary Journal of Literary Prosody, 2 (1998), <http//sizcol.u-shizuoka-ken.ac.jp/versif/CurrRevs.html>

--- , *The Ghost of Meter: Culture and Prosody in American Free Verse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993)

Fowler, Roger, '"Prose Rhythm" and Metre', in *Essays on Style and Language* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 82-99

Frank, Robert, and Henry Sayre, eds, *The Line in Postmodern Poetry* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988)

Friebert, Stuart, David Walker, and David Young, eds., *A Field Guide to Contemporary Poetry and Poetics*, rev. edn (Oberlin: Oberlin College Press, 1997)

Fussell, Paul, *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form*, rev. edn (New York: Random House, 1979)

Gall, Sally M., 'Pound and the Modern Melic Tradition: Towards a Demystification of "Absolute Rhythm"', *Paideuma*, 8 (1979), 35-47

Gardner, Helen, *The Art of T.S. Eliot* (London: Cresset Press, 1949)

Gasparov, M.L., *A History of European Versification*, trans. by G.S. Smith and Marina Tarlinskaja, ed. by G.S. Smith and Leofranc Holford-Stevens (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996)

Gates, Rosemary L., 'Forging An American Poetry From Speech Rhythms: Williams After Whitman', *Poetics Today*, 8 (1986), 503-27

Getty, Robert J., A. Thomas Cole and T.V.F. Brogan, 'Cretic', in Preminger and Brogan, p. 248

Golding, Alan, 'Charles Olson's Metrical Thicket: Toward A Theory of Free-Verse Prosody', *Language and Style*, 14 (1981), 64-78

Golomb, Harai, *Enjambment in Poetry: Language and Verse in Interaction* (Tel Aviv: Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, 1979)

Griffiths, Eric, *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989)

Gross, Harvey, *Sound and Form in Modern Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964)

Groves, Peter L., *Strange Music: The Metre of the English Heroic Line*, ELS Monograph Series, 74 (Victoria: University of Victoria, 1998)

Gunn, Thom, 'Small Persistent Difficulties', in *Robert Creeley's Life and Work: A Sense of Increment*, ed. by John Wilson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987), 401-09 (first publ. in *Times Literary Supplement*, 4 November 1983, p. 1226)

Halle, Morris, and Samuel Jay Keyser, *English Stress: Its Form, Its Growth and Its Role in Verse* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971)

Hanson, Kristin, and Paul Kiparsky, 'A Parametric Theory of Poetic Meter', *Language*, 72 (1996), 287-335

Hartman, Charles, *Free Verse: An Essay on Prosody* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980)

--- , *Jazz Text: Voice and Improvisation in Poetry, Jazz and Song* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991)

Hawlin, Stefan, 'Bunting's Northumbrian Tongue: Against the Monument of the Centre', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 25 (1995), 103-113

--- , 'Eliot Reads *The Waste Land*: Text and Recording', *MLR*, 87 (1992), 545-54

Hayes, Bruce, 'The Prosodic Hierarchy in Meter', in Kiparsky and Youmans, pp. 201-60

Herbert, T. Walter, 'Tunes of Poetry: Experiments in Recognition', *Emory University Quarterly*, 16 (1960), 164-73

Hobsbaum, Philip, *Metre, Rhythm and Verse Form* (London: Routledge, 1996)

Holder, Alan, *Rethinking Meter: A New Approach to the Verse Line* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1995)

Hollander, John, 'The Poem in the Eye', *Shenandoah*, 23 (1972), 3-23

--- , *Vision and Resonance: Two Senses of Poetic Form*, 2nd edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985)

Holscher, Rory, and Robert Schulz, eds., 'The Line: A Poets' Symposium', *Epoch*, 29 (1980), 161-224

Hough, Graham, 'Free Verse', *Proceedings of the British Academy*. 43 (1957), 157-77

Hrushovski, Benjamin, 'On Free Rhythms in Modern Poetry; Preliminary Remarks toward a Critical Theory of Their Structures and Functions', in *Style in Language*, ed. by Thomas A. Sebeok ([Cambridge]: Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and New York: John Wiley, 1960), pp. 173-90

Hulme, T.E., 'A Lecture on Modern Poetry', in *The Collected Writings of T.E. Hulme*, ed. by Karen Csengeri (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 49-58

Jakobson, Roman, 'Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics', in *Style in Language*, ed. by Thomas A. Sebeok ([Cambridge]: Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and New York: John Wiley, 1960), pp. 350-77

--- , 'The Dominant', in *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, ed. by Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1971), pp. 82-87 (repr. in *Language in Literature*, ed. by Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1987), pp. 41-46)

Kahn, Gustave, 'A M. Brunetière', *La Revue indépendante*, 26 (1888), 481-86

--- , 'Préface sur le vers libre', *Premiers poèmes* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1897), pp. 3-38

Kiparsky, Paul, and Gilbert Youmans, eds., *Phonetics and Phonology, Volume 1: Rhythm and Meter* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1989)

Kirby-Smith, H.T., *The Origins of Free Verse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996)

Küper, Christoph, 'Metrics Today: An Introduction', *Poetics Today*, 16 (1995), 389-409

Laferrière, Daniel, 'Free and Non-Free Verse: A Response to Howard McCord's "Breaking and Entering"', *Language and Style*, 10 (1977), 79-85

Lane, M. Travis, 'Dear Editors', *Canadian Literature*, 155 (1997), 201-02

Lawler, Justus, *Celestial Pantomime: Poetic Structures of Transcendence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979)

Lawrence, D.H., 'Poetry of the Present', *New Poems* (New York: Huesch, 1920), pp. i-x (repr. in *The Complete Poems*, ed. by Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts, rev. edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), pp. 181-86)

Leech, Geoffrey, *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (London: Longmans, 1969)

Lehiste, Ilse, 'Rhythm of Poetry, Rhythm of Prose' in *Phonetic Linguistics: Essays in Honor of Peter Ladefoged*, ed. by Victoria Fromkin (Orlando: Academic Press, 1985), 145-55

--- , 'Rhythm of Spoken Sentences and Read Poetry', in *Phonologia 1984*, ed. by Wolfgang Dressler and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 165-73

Levin, Samuel R., 'Suprasegmentals and the Performance of Poetry', *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 48 (1962), 366-72

--- , 'The Conventions of Poetry', in *Literary Style: A Symposium*, ed. by Samuel R. Levin (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 177-93

Lewis, C.S., 'Metre', in *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. by Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 280-85 (first publ. in *A Review of English Literature*, 1.1 (1960), 45-50)

Loesch, Katherine T., 'Literary Ambiguity and Oral Performance', *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 51 (1965), 258-67

Lowell, Amy, 'Some Musical Analogies in Modern Poetry', *Musical Quarterly*, 6 (1920), 127-57

--- , 'The Rhythms of Free Verse', *Dial*, 64 (1918), 51-57

--- , 'Vers Libre and Metrical Prose', *Poetry*, 3 (1914), 213-20

Malof, Joseph, *A Manual of English Meters* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970)

McCord, Howard, 'Breaking and Entering', *Language and Style*, 10 (1977), 73-79

Meschonnic, Henri, *Critique du rythme: anthropologie historique du langage* (Lagrasse: Verdier, 1982)

Moore, Marianne, 'The Accented Syllable', *Egoist*, 3 (1916), 151-52

Morgan, Frederick, 'William Carlos Williams: Imagery, Rhythm, Form', *Sewanee Review*, 55 (1947), 675-90

Mukarovsky, Jan, 'Intonation comme facteur de rythme poétique', *Archives néerlandaises de phonétique expérimentale*, 8-9 (1933), 153-65

Murphy, Francis, ed., *Walt Whitman: A Critical Anthology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969)

Nagy, Gregory, *Poetry and Performance: Homer and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Nist, John, 'The Word-Group Cadence: Basis of English Metrics', *Linguistics*, 6 (1964), 73-82

'Notes and Announcements', *Poetry*, 1 (1912), 64-65

Omond, Thomas S., *English Metrists* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921)

Orr, Peter, 'Poetry and the Human Voice', *English*, 22 (1973), 18-24

Page, Frederick, 'Introduction' to *The Poems of Coventry Patmore*, ed. by Frederick Page (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), pp. vii-xv

Patmore, Coventry, 'An Essay on English Metrical Law', in Roth, pp. 3-50 (first publ. in *North British Review*, 27 (1857), 127-61)

Perloff, Marjorie, 'After Free Verse', in Bernstein, pp. 86-110

--- , 'The Linear Fallacy', *Georgia Review*, 35 (1981), 855-69

--- , 'To Give A Design: Williams and the Visualization of Poetry', in *William Carlos Williams: Man and Poet,* ed. by Carroll Terrell (Orono: National Poetry Foundation, 1981), pp. 159-86

Perry, Bliss, *Walt Whitman: His Life and Work* (London: Constable; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906)

Petterson, Thore, 'Prose and Poetry', *Studia Linguistica*, 36 (1982), 64-87

Pike, Kenneth, 'Beyond the Sentence', in *Selected Writings*, ed. by Ruth M. Brend (The Hague: Mouton, 1972), pp. 192-99 (first publ. in *College Composition and Communication*, 15 (1964), 129-35)

Pople, Ian, 'Basil Bunting's *Briggflatts*: A Case Study in Intonational Prosody', *Language and Literature*, 7 (1998), 21-38

Pound, Ezra, 'A Retrospect', in *Pavannes and Divisions* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1918), pp. 95-111 (repr. in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. by T.S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), pp. 3-14)

--- , *The Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907-1941*, ed. by D.D. Paige (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950)

--- , 'The Tradition', *Poetry*, 3(1914), 137-41

Preminger, Alex, and T.V.F. Brogan, eds., *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993)

Prince, F.T., 'Voice and Verse: Some Problems of Modern Poetry', *English*, 20 (1971), 77-83

Ramsey, Paul, 'Free Verse: Some Steps Toward Definition', *Studies in Philology*, 45 (1968), 98-108

Ricks, Christopher, 'A Pure Organic Pleasure in the Lines', *Essays in Criticism*, 21 (1971), 1-32

Roethke, Theodore, *On the Poet and his Craft: Selected Prose of Theodore Roethke*, ed. by Ralph D. Mills, Jr (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965)

--- , 'Some Remarks on Rhythm', *Poetry*, 97 (1960), 35-46

Roth, Mary Augustine, *Coventry Patmore's 'Essay on English Metrical Law': A Critical Edition with a Commentary* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1961)

Saintsbury, George, *A History of English Prosody from the Twelfth Century to the Present Day*, 3 vols (London: Macmillan and Co., 1906-10)

Sayre, Henry, *The Visual Text of William Carlos Williams* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983)

Scott, Clive, *Vers Libre: The Emergence of Free Verse in France 1886-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990)

Scripture, E.W., 'The Study of English Speech by New Methods of Phonetic Investigation', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 10 (1921-23), 271-99

Sedakova, Olga, and Valerii Kotov, '"The Ailing Spirit is Assuaged by Song": On the Constructive Role of Vocalism in Russian Verse', trans. by Michael Basker, *Essays in Poetics*, 21 (1996), 93-101

Stalker, James C., 'Reader Expectations and the Poetic Line', *Language and Style*, 15 (1982), 241-52

Stallworthy, Jon, 'Versification', in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, 3rd edn (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983), pp. 1403-22

Steele, Timothy, *All The Fun's in How You Say A Thing: An Explanation of Meter and Versification* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1999)

--- , *Missing Measures: Modern Poetry and the Revolt against Meter* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1990)

Stewart, George R., Jr, *Modern Metrical Technique As Illustrated by Ballad Meter (1700-1920)* (New York: [n.pub.], 1922)

Swigg, Richard, 'Williams's Recordings: "Facing the Universe of Sound"', *William Carlos Williams Review*, 20 (1994), 72-77

Swinburne, Algernon, *Under the Microscope* (London: D. White, 1872)

Taglicht, Josef, 'The Function of Intonation in English Verse', *Language and Style*, 4 (1971), 116-22

Tamplin, Ronald, *Rhythm and Rhyme* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993)

Tarlinskaja, Marina, *English Verse: Theory and History* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976)

--- , 'General and Particular Aspects of Meter: Literatures, Epochs, Poets', in Kiparsky and Youmans, pp. 121-54

Taylor, Dennis, *Hardy's Metres and Victorian Prosody* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988)

Thompson, John, *The Founding of English Metre* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966; repr. 1989)

Tomachevski, B., 'Sur le vers', in *Théorie de la littérature: textes des formalistes russes*, ed. and trans. by Tzvetan Todorov (Paris: Seuil, 1965), pp. 154-69 (first Russian pub. 1922-29)

Tsur, Reuven, 'Picture Poems: Some Cognitive and Aesthetic Principles', <http://www.tau.ac.il/~tsurxx/Picture_Poem_abstract.html>

--- , *Poetic Rhythm: Structure and Performance* (Berne: Peter Lang, 1998)

--- , 'Rhyme and Cognitive Poetics', *Poetics Today*, 17 (1996), 55-87

--- , *Toward A Theory of Cognitive Poetics* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1992)

--- , *What Makes Sound Patterns Expressive?* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992)

Turco, Lewis, *The New Book of Forms: A Handbook of Poetics* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1986)

Turner, Frederick, and Ernst Pöppel, 'The Neural Lyre: Poetic Meter, the Brain, and Time', *Poetry*, 142 (1983), 277-309

van de Water, Donna A., and Daniel C. O'Connell, 'In and About the Poetic Line', *Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society*, 23 (1985), 397-400

Weissmiller, Edward R., 'Blank Verse', in *A Milton Encyclopedia,* ed. by William B. Hunter, Jr, and others, 9 vols (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1978), I, 179-92

Wesling, Donald, 'Grammetrics', in Preminger and Brogan, pp. 480-81

--- , *The Chances of Rhyme: Device and Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980)

--- , *The New Poetries: Poetic Form since Coleridge and Wordsworth* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1985)

--- , *The Scissors of Meter: Grammetrics and Reading* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996)

Wesling, Donald, and Eniko Bollobas, 'Free Verse', in Preminger and Brogan, pp. 425-27

Whitehall, Harold, 'From Linguistics to Criticism', *Kenyon Review*, 18 (1956), 411-22

Williams, William Carlos, 'America, Whitman, and the Art of Poetry', *Poetry Journal*, 8 (1917), 27-36 (repr. in *William Carlos Williams Review*, 13 (1987), 1-4)

--- , 'Free Verse', in *Encylopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. by Alex Preminger, Frank J. Warnke and O.B. Hardison, Jr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 288-90

Wimsatt, W.K., Jr, 'In Search of Verbal Mimesis', *Yale French Studies*, 52 (1975), 229-48

--- , 'The Rule and the Norm: Halle and Keyser on Chaucer's Meter', in *Literary Style: A Symposium*, ed. by Samuel R. Levin (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 197-215

Wimsatt, W.K., Jr, and Monroe C. Beardsley, 'The Concept of Meter: An Exercise in Abstraction', *PMLA*, 74 (1959), 585-98

Winn, James Anderson, *Unsuspected Eloquence: A History of the Relations between Poetry and Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981)

Winters, Yvor, *Primitivism and Decadence: A Study of American Experimental Poetry* (New York: Arrow, 1937)

Wright, George T., 'Hearing the Measures', *Style*, 31 (1997), 148-94

--- , *Shakespeare's Metrical Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)

2 LINGUISTICS AND PHONETICS

Abercrombie, David, *Studies in Phonetics and Linguistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965)

Altenberg, Bengt, *Prosodic Patterns in Spoken English: Studies in the Correlation between Prosody and Grammar for Text-to-Speech Conversion* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1987)

Armstrong, Lilias E., and Ida C. Ward, *Handbook of English Intonation* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1926)

Beckman, Mary E., *Stress and Non-Stress Accent* (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1986)

Beckman, Mary E., and Gayle Ayers Elam, *Guidelines for ToBI Labelling*, Version 3 (March 1997), <http://ling.ohio-state.edu/phonetics/ E_ToBI/ etobi_homepage.html>

Beckman, Mary E., and Janet B. Pierrehumbert, 'Intonational Structure in Japanese and English', *Phonology Yearbook*, 3 (1986), 255-309

Biber, Douglas, *Variation across Speech and Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)

Bing, Janet, *Aspects of English Prosody* (New York: Garland, 1985)

Bloomfield, Leonard, *Language* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1933)

Bolinger, Dwight, 'Accent Is Predictable (If You're A Mind-Reader)', *Language*, 48 (1972), 633-44

--- , 'A Theory of Pitch Accent in English', *Word*, 14 (1958), 109-49

--- , *Intonation and its Parts. Melody in Spoken English* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986)

--- , *Intonation and its Uses: Melody in Grammar and Discourse* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989)

--- , 'Intonation in American English', in Hirst and Di Cristo, pp. 45-55

--- , 'The Role of Accent in Extraposition and Focus', *Studies in Language*, 16 (1992), 265-324

--- , *Two Kinds of Vowel, Two Kinds of Rhythm* (Bloomington: Indiana University Linguistics Club, 1981)

Brazil, David, *A Grammar of Speech* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)

--- , 'Listening to People Reading', in *Advances in Spoken Discourse Analysis*, ed. by Malcolm Coulthard (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 209-41

--- , *The Communicative Value of Intonation in English*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

--- , 'The Intonation of Sentences Read Aloud', in Gibbon and Richter (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984), pp. 46-66

Brazil, David, Malcolm Coulthard, and Catherine Johns, *Discourse Intonation and Language Teaching* (London: Longman, 1980),

Brown, Gillian, *Listening to Spoken English* (London: Longman, 1977)

Brown, Gillian, and George Yule, *Discourse Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983)

Butler, Charles, *The English Grammar, or the Institution of Letters, Syllables, and Words, in the English Tongue* (Oxford: the author, 1633)

Chafe, Wallace, 'Writing in the Perspective of Speaking', in *Studying Writing: Linguistic Approaches*, ed. by Charles R. Cooper and Sidney Greenbaum (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986), pp. 12-39

Chomsky, Noam, and Morris Halle, *The Sound Pattern of English* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968)

Clark, John, and Colin Yallop, *An Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990)

Cooper, William E., 'A Psychological Perspective on Intonational Grouping', *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 18 (1989), 549-52

Couper-Kuhlen, Elizabeth, *An Introduction to English Prosody* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986)

--- , *English Speech Rhythm: Form and Function in Everyday Verbal Interaction* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1993)

Couper-Kuhlen, Elizabeth, and Margret Selting, eds., *Prosody in Conversation: Interactional Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Cruttenden, Alan, *Intonation*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

--- , 'Intonation and the Comma', *Visible Language*, 25 (1990), 54-73

--- , 'Rises in English', in Windsor Lewis, pp. 155-73

Crystal, David, 'Documenting Rhythmical Change', in Windsor Lewis, pp. 174-79

--- , *Prosodic Systems and Intonation in English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969)

--- , *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

--- , *The English Tone of Voice: Essays in Intonation, Prosody and Paralanguage* (London: Edward Arnold, 1975)

Crystal, David, and Derek Davy, *Investigating English Style* (London: Longman, 1969)

Cutler, Anne, Delphine Dahan and Wilma van Donselaar, 'Prosody in the Comprehension of Spoken Language: A Literature Review', *Language and Speech*, 40 (1997), 141-201

Fear, Beverley, Anne Cutler and Sally Butterfield, 'The Strong / Weak Syllable Distinction in English', *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 97 (1995), 1893-1904

Fónagy, Ivan, 'A New Method of Communicating the Perception of Prosodic Features', *Language and Speech*, 21 (1978), 34-49

Fowler, Carol A., 'Comments on the Contributions by Pierrehumbert and Nearey', *Journal of Phonetics*, 18 (1990), 425-34

Fry, D.B., 'Duration and Intensity as Physical Correlates of Linguistic Stress', *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 27 (1955), 765-68

--- , 'Experiments in the Perception of Stress', *Language and Speech*, 1 (1958), 126-52

Fuchs, Anna, '"Deaccenting" and "Default Accent"', in Gibbon and Richter, 134-64

Fudge, Erik, *English Word-Stress* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984)

Gay, Thomas, 'Physiological and Acoustic Correlates of Perceived Stress', *Language and Speech*, 21 (1978), 347- 353

Gibbon, Dafydd, and Helmut Richter, eds., *Intonation, Accent and Rhythm: Studies in Discourse Phonology* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984)

Gimson, A.C., *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*, 4th ed., rev. by Susan Ramsaran (London: Edward Arnold, 1989)

Grabe, Esther, and Francis Nolan, 'IViE Labelling Guide', <http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/ling/ivyweb/guide.html>

Gussenhoven, Carlos, 'Focus, Mode, and the Nucleus', *Journal of Linguistics*, 19 (1983), 377-417

--- , *On the Grammar and Semantics of Sentence Accents* (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1984)

--- , 'The English Rhythm Rule as an Accent Deletion Rule', *Phonology*, 8 (1991), 1-35

Gussenhoven, Carlos, and Haike Jacobs, *Understanding Phonology* (London: Arnold, 1998)

Halle, Morris, and Jean-Roger Vergnaud, *An Essay on Stress* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987)

Halliday, M.A.K, *Intonation and Grammar in British English* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967)

Hardcastle, William J., and John Laver, eds., *The Handbook of Phonetic Sciences* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997)

Harding, D.W., *Words into Rhythm: English Speech Rhythm in Verse and Prose* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976)

't Hart, Johan, 'A Phonetic Approach to Intonation: from Pitch Contours to Intonation Patterns', in Gibbon and Richter, pp. 193-202

't Hart, Johan, René Collier and Antonie Cohen, *A Perceptual Study of Intonation: An Experimental-Phonetic Approach to Speech Melody* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

Hayes, Bruce, *Metrical Stress Theory: Principles and Case Studies* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1995)

Hirst, Daniel, 'Intonation in British English', in Hirst and Di Cristo, pp. 56-77

Hirst, Daniel, and Albert Di Cristo, 'A Survey of Intonation Systems', in Hirst and Di Cristo, pp. 1-44

Hirst, Daniel, and Albert Di Cristo, *Intonation Systems: A Survey of Twenty Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Hogg, Richard and C.B. McCully, *Metrical Phonology: A Coursebook* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)

Hubbell, Allan F., 'The Phonemic Analysis of Unstressed Vowels', *American Speech*, 25 (1950), 105-11

Huss, Volker, 'English Word Stress in the Post-Nuclear Position', *Phonetica*, 35 (1978), 86-105

Jones, Daniel, *An Outline of English Phonetics*, 8th edn (Cambridge: Heffer, 1957)

--- , *Intonation Curves* (Berlin: Teubner, 1909)

Kennedy, Graeme, *An Introduction to Corpus Linguistics* (London: Longman, 1998)

Kingdon, Roger, *The Groundwork of English Intonation* (London: Longmans, Green, 1958)

Knowles, Gerry, 'From Text Structure to Prosodic Structure', in Knowles, Wichmann and Alderson, pp. 146-67

--- , *Patterns of Spoken English* (London: Longman, 1987)

--- , 'Pitch Contours and Tones in the Lancaster / IBM Spoken English Corpus', in *New Directions in English Language Corpora - Methodology, Results, Software Developments*, ed. by Gerhard Leitner (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992), pp. 289-99

--- , 'The Value of Prosodic Transcriptions', in Knowles, Wichmann and Alderson, pp. 87-105

Knowles, Gerry, Anne Wichmann, and Peter Alderson, eds., *Working with Speech: Perspectives on Research into the Lancaster / IBM Spoken English Corpus* (London: Longman, 1996)

Knowles, Gerry, Briony Williams, and Lita Taylor, *A Corpus of Formal British English Speech: the Lancaster / IBM Spoken English Corpus* (London: Longman, 1996)

Ladd, D. Robert, 'English Compound Stress', in Gibbon and Richter, pp. 253-66

--- , *Intonational Phonology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

--- , *The Structure of Intonational Meaning: Evidence from English* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980)

Ladd, D. Robert, and Anne Cutler, 'Models and Measurements in the Study of Prosody', in Ladd and Cutler, pp. 1-10

Ladd, D. Robert, and Anne Cutler, eds., *Prosody: Models and Measurements* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1983)

Ladefoged, Peter, *A Course in Phonetics*, 3rd edn (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1993)

Laver, John, *Principles of Phonetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Leech, Geoffrey, 'Corpora and Theories of Linguistic Performance', in *Directions in Corpus Linguistics: Proceedings of Nobel Symposium 82, Stockholm, 4-8 August 1991*, ed. by Jan Svartvik, Trends in Linguistics Studies and Monographs 65 (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992), pp. 105-122

Lehiste, Ilse, *Suprasegmentals* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970)

Liberman, Mark, and Alan Prince, 'On Stress and Linguistic Rhythm', *Linguistic Inquiry*, 8 (1977), 249-336

Lieberman, Philip, *Intonation, Perception and Language* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1967)

--- , 'On the Acoustic Basis of Perception of Intonation by Linguists', *Word*, 21 (1965), 40-54

--- , 'Some Acoustic Correlates of Word Stress in American English', *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 32 (1960), 451-54

Lieberman, Philip, and Sheila E. Blumstein, *Speech Physiology, Speech Perception and Acoustic Phonetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)

Lyons, John, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968)

Malmkjær, Kirsten, ed., *The Linguistics Encyclopedia* (London: Routledge, 1991)

McClean, M.D., and W.R. Tiffany, 'The Acoustic Parameters of Stress in Relation to Syllable Position, Speech Loudness and Rate', *Language and Speech*, 16 (1973), 283-90

McEnery, Tony, and Andrew Wilson, *Corpus Linguistics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996)

McRoberts, Gerald W., Michael Studdert-Kennedy, and Donald P. Shankweiler, 'The Role of Fundamental Frequency in Signaling Linguistic Stress and Affect: Evidence for a Dissociation', *Perception and Psychophysics*, 57 (1995), 159-74

Morton, John, and Wiktor Jassem, 'Acoustic Correlates of Stress', *Language and Speech*, 8 (1965), 159-81

Nakatani, Lloyd, and Carletta H. Aston, 'Perceiving The Stress Pattern Of Words In Sentences', *JASA*, 63: Supplement No. 1 (1978), S55

Nespor, Marina, and Irene Vogel, *Prosodic Phonology* (Dordrecht: Foris, 1986)

Newman, Stanley, 'On the Stress System of English', *Word*, 2 (1946), 171-87

Nooteboom, Sieb, 'Prosody of Speech: Melody and Rhythm', in Hardcastle and Laver, pp. 640-73

Ohala, John, J., 'Consumer's Guide to Evidence in Phonology', *Phonology Yearbook*, 3 (1986), 3-26

--- , 'Review of *Suprasegmentals* by Ilse Lehiste', *Language*, 51 (1975), 736-40

--- , 'The Relationship Between Phonetics and Phonology', in Hardcastle and Laver, pp. 674-94

Palmer, Harold, *English Intonation* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1922)

Pickering, Brian, Briony Williams and Gerry Knowles, 'Analysis of Transcriber Differences in the SEC', in Knowles, Wichmann and Alderson, pp. 61-86

Pierrehumbert, Janet, 'Phonological and Phonetic Representation', *Journal of Phonetics*, 18 (1990), 375-94

--- , 'Synthesizing Intonation', *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 70 (1981), 985-95

Pike, Kenneth, L., *The Intonation of American English* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1945)

Quirk, Randolph, and others, 'Studies in the Correspondence of Prosodic to Grammatical Features in English', in Randolph Quirk, *Essays on the English Language: Medieval and Modern* (London: Longman, 1968), pp. 120-35

Quirk, Randolph, and others, *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (London: Longman, 1985)

Rischel, Jorgen, 'What Is a Phonetic Representation?', *Journal of Phonetics*, 18 (1990), 395-410

Roach, Peter, 'On the Distinction between "Stress-Timed" and "Syllable-Timed" Languages', in *Linguistic Controversies: Essays in Linguistic Theory and Practice in Honour of F.R. Palmer*, ed. by David Crystal (London: Edward Arnold, 1982), pp. 73-79

Roelof de Pijper, Jan, and Angelien A. Sanderman, 'On the Perceptual Strength of Prosodic Boundaries and its Relation to Suprasegmental Cues', *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 96 (1994), 2037-47

Schmerling, Susan, *Aspects of English Sentence Stress* (London: University of Texas Press, 1976)

Scott, Clive, 'Rhythm', in *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, 10 vols (Oxford: Pergamon, 1994), VII, 3575-77

Selkirk, Elizabeth O., *Phonology and Syntax: The Relation between Sound and Structure* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984)

--- , 'Sentence Prosody: Intonation, Stress, and Phrasing', in *The Handbook of Phonological Theory*, ed. by John A. Goldsmith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 550-69

Sharpe, Alan, 'Falling-Rising Intonation Patterns in English', *Phonetica*, 2 (1958), 127-52

Silverman, Kim E., and Janet B. Pierrehumbert, 'The Timing of Prenuclear High Accents in English', in *Papers in Laboratory Phonology I: Between the Grammar and Physics of Speech*, ed. by John Kingston and Mary E. Beckman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 72-106

Steele, Joshua, *An Essay Towards Establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech* (London: J. Almon, 1775; repr. Menston, Yorkshire: The Scolar Press, 1969)

Stockwell, Robert, 'The Role of Intonation: Reconsiderations and Other Considerations', in *Intonation*, ed. by Dwight Bolinger (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. 87-109

Svartvik, Jan, and Randolph Quirk, eds., *A Corpus of English Conversation*, Lund Studies in English 56 (Lund: Gleerup, 1980)

Sweet, Henry, *A Handbook of Phonetics, Including a Popular Exposition of the Principles of Spelling Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1877)

Taylor, Lita, 'The Compilation of the Spoken English Corpus', in Knowles, Wichmann and Alderson, pp. 20-37

Tench, Paul, *The Intonation Systems of English* (London: Cassell, 1996)

Trager, George L., and Henry Lee Smith, Jr, *An Outline of English Structure*, Studies in Linguistics: Occasional Papers, III (Norman: Battenberg Press, 1951; repr. Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1957)

Vaissière, Jacqueline, 'Language-Independent Prosodic Features', in Ladd and Cutler, pp. 53-66

Vanderslice, Ralph, and Peter Ladefoged, 'Binary Suprasegmental Features and Transformational Word-Accentuation Rules', *Language*, 48 (1972), 819-38

Viel, Michel, *La Phonétique de l'anglais*, 5th edn (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1995)

Wells, J.C., *Accents of English*, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982)

Wichmann, Anne, 'Prosodic Style: A Corpus-Based Approach', in Knowles, Wichmann and Alderson, pp. 168-88

Williams, Briony, 'The Formulation of an Intonation Transcription System for British English', in Knowles, Wichmann and Alderson, pp. 38-60

--- , 'The Status of Corpora as Linguistic Data', in Knowles, Wichmann and Alderson, pp. 3-19

Windsor Lewis, Jack, ed., *Studies in English and General Phonetics: Essays in Honour of Professor J.D. O'Connor* (London: Routledge, 1995)

Yule, George, 'Speakers' Topics and Major Paratones', *Lingua*, 52 (1980), 33-47

3 THEORIES OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Altieri, Charles, *Act and Quality: A Theory of Literary Meaning and Humanistic Understanding* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981)

Athanases, Steven Z., 'When Print Alone Fails Poetry: Performance as a Contingency of Literary Value', *Text and Performance Quarterly,* 11 (1991), 116-27

Brown, Donald E., *Human Universals* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991)

Culler, Jonathan, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975)

Duncan, Robert, 'Ideas of the Meaning of Form', in *Fictive Certainties* (New York: New Directions, 1985), pp. 89-105

Easthope, Antony, *Poetry as Discourse* (London: Methuen, 1983)

Engler, Balz, *Reading and Listening: The Modes of Communicating Poetry and their Influence on the Texts* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1982)

Forrest, William Craig, 'The Poem as a Summons to Performance', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 9 (1969), 298-305

Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *L'Actualité du beau,* ed. and trans. by Elfie Poulain (Aix-en-Provence: Alinea, 1992)

--- , 'Poetry and Punctuation', in *Literature and Philosophy in Dialogue: Essays in German Literary Theory*, trans. by Robert H. Paslick (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 131-37

--- , *Truth and Method*, 2nd edn, trans. by William Glen-Doepel, translation rev. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London: Sheed & Ward, 1989)

Holub, Robert, 'Reception Theory; School of Constance', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume Eight: From*

Formalism to Poststructuralism, ed. by Raman Selden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 319-46

Jakobson, Roman, 'The Dominant', trans. by Herbert Eagle, in Matejka, Ladislav, and Krystyna Pomorska, eds., *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1971), pp. 82-87 (repr. in *Language in Literature*, ed. by Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1987), pp. 41-46)

Jakobson, Roman, and Claude Lévi-Strauss, '«Les chats» de Charles Baudelaire', *L'Homme*, 2 (1962), 5-21

Jauss, Hans Robert, 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory', trans. by Elizabeth Benzinger, *New Literary History*, 2 (1967), 7-37

Kintgen, Eugene R., *The Perception of Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983)

Kiparsky, Paul, 'On Theory and Interpretation', in *The Linguistics of Writing. Arguments between Language and Literature*, ed. by Nigel Fabb and others (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), pp. 185-98

Levy, Jiri, *Paralipomena* (Brno: Universita Jana Evangelisty, 1971)

Lotman, Iouri, *La structure du texte artistique*, trans. by Anne Fournier, ed. by Henri Meschonnic (Paris: Gallimard, 1973)

McKie, Michael, 'Semantic Rhyme: A Reappraisal', *Essays in Criticism*, 46 (1996), 340-58

Olson, Charles, *Human Universe and Other Essays*, ed. by Donald Allen (New York: Grove Press, 1967)

Pilkington, Adrian, 'Poetic Effects: A Relevance Theory Perspective', in *Literary Pragmatics*, ed. by Roger D. Sell (London: Routledge, 1991)

Richards, I.A., *Practical Criticism* (London: Kegan Paul, 1929)

Rosenblatt, Louise, *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978)

Ruthven, K.K., *Critical Assumptions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979)

Sperber, Dan, and Deirdre Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995)

Wimsatt, W.K., Jr, 'One Relation of Rhyme to Reason', in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* ([n.p.]: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), pp. 153-66

Woodring, Carl, ed., *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Vol. 14: Table Talk*, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press; London: Routledge, 1990)

4 THEORY OF MUSIC

Clarke, Eric F., 'Rhythm and Timing in Music', in Deutsch, pp. 473-500

Cooper, Grosvenor, and Leonard B. Meyer, *The Rhythmic Structure of Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960)

Deutsch, Diana, ed., *The Psychology of Music*, 2nd edn (San Diego: Academic Press, 1999)

Dürr, Walther, Walter Gerstenberg and Jonathan Harvey, 'Rhythm', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie, 20 vols (London: Macmillan, 1980), XV, 804-24

Epstein, David, *Shaping Time: Music, the Brain and Performance* (New York: Schirmer, 1995)

Lerdahl, Fred and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983)

Longuet-Higgins, H. Christopher, and Christopher S. Lee, 'The Perception of Musical Rhythm', *Perception*, 11 (1982), 115-28

Stravinsky, Igor, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947)

Weinberger, Norman M., 'Music and the Auditory System', in Deutsch, pp. 47-87

5 LITERARY AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Brogan, Jacqueline Vaught, *Part of the Climate: American Cubist Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991)

Butler, Christopher, *Early Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994)

Cashman, Sean Dennis, *America in the Age of the Titans: The Progressive Era and World War I* (New York: New York University Press, 1988)

Dearing, Robert, and Celia Dearing, *The Guinness Book of Recorded Sound* (Enfield: Guinness Books, 1984)

Fredman, Stephen, *The Grounding of American Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

Gantz, Timothy, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1993)

Harmer, J.B., *Victory in Limbo: Imagism 1908-1917* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1975)

Hoffman, Herbert H., and Rita Ludwig Hoffman, eds., *International Index to Recorded Poetry* (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1983)

Johnson, Josephine A., 'Return of the Scops: English Poetry Performance since 1960', in *Performance of Literature in Historical Perspectives*, ed. by David W. Thompson (New York: Lanham, 1983), pp. 301-16

Levenson, Michael H., *A Genealogy of Modernism. A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908-22* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984)

Monroe, Harriet, *A Poet's Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1938)

Mozeko, Edward, 'Russian Literary Constructivism: Towards a Theory of Poetic Language', *Canadian Contributions to the VIII Annual Congress of Slavists* (Ottawa: Canadian Association of Slavists, 1978), pp. 61-70

O'Brien, Robert J., 'Literary Recordings', in *Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound in the United States*, ed. by Guy A. Marco (London: Garland, 1993), pp. 392-95

Perkins, David, *A History of Modern Poetry, Vol. 1: From the 1890s to the High Modernist Mode* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1976)

Pound, Ezra, 'Harold Monro', *Criterion*, 11 (1932), 581-92

Prebish, Charles S., *Historical Dictionary of Buddhism* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1993)

Pynchon, Thomas, *Mason and Dixon* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1997)

Rittenhouse, Jessie B., *The Younger American Poets* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1904)

Roach, Helen, *Spoken Records*, 3rd edn (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1970)

Ross, Robert H., *The Georgian Revolt*: *Rise and Fall of a Poetic Ideal 1910-22* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957)

Stanford, Donald E., 'Robert Bridges and the Free Verse Rebellion', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 2 (1971), 19-32

Taupin, René, *L'Influence du symbolisme français sur la poésie américaine* (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Revue de littérature comparée, 1929; repr. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1975)

Verdonk, Peter, ed., *Twentieth-Century Poetry: From Text to Context* (London: Routledge, 1993)

Winter, Erich, 'Philae', *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. by Jane Turner, 34 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1996), XXIV, 602-3

Wolfe, Charles, and Kip Lornell, *The Life and Legend of Leadbelly* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1993)

6 WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

A) WORKS

Williams, William Carlos, *Collected Poems*, ed. by A. Walton Litz and Christopher MacGowan, 2 vols (Manchester: Carcanet, 1987-88; repr. London: Paladin, 1991)

--- , *I Wanted to Write A Poem: The Autobiography of the Works of a Poet*, ed. by Edith Heal (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958)

--- , *Kora in Hell: Improvisations*, in *Imaginations*, ed. by Webster Schott (New York: New Directions, 1970), pp. 6-82 (first publ. Boston: Four Seas, 1920)

--- , *Selected Essays of William Carlos Williams* (New York: Random House, 1954; repr. New York: New Directions, 1969)

--- , 'Speech Rhythm', MS repr. in Mike Weaver, *William Carlos Williams: The American Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 82-83

--- , 'Studiously Unprepared: Notes for Various Talks and Readings: May 1940 to April 1941', ed. by Paul Mariani, *Sulfur*, 4 (1982), pp. 4-35

--- , *The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams* (New York: Random House, 1951; repr. New York: New Directions, 1967)

--- , 'The Great Opportunity', *Egoist*, 3 (1916), 137

--- , *The Selected Letters of William Carlos Williams*, ed. by John C. Thirlwall (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1957)

--- , *The Tempers* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1913)

Williams, William Carlos, and Ezra Pound, *Pound / Williams: Selected Letters of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams*, ed. by Hugh Witemeyer (New York: New Directions, 1996)

B) SECONDARY MATERIAL

Breslin, James, *William Carlos Williams: An American Artist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970)

Doyle, Charles, *William Carlos Williams: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980)

Frail, David, *The Early Politics and Poetics of William Carlos Williams* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987)

Gerber, Philip L, 'So Much Depends: The Williams Foreground', in *Profile of William Carlos Williams*, ed. by Jerome Mazzaro (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1971), pp. 5-24

Guimond, James, *The Art of William Carlos Williams: A Discovery and Possession of America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1968)

Koch, Vivienne, *William Carlos Williams* (Norfolk: New Directions, 1950)

MacGowan, Christopher J., *William Carlos Williams's Early Poetry: The Visual Arts Background* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984)

Mariani, Paul, 'Hopkins and Williams: Too Little, Too Late', in *Hopkins Among the Poets: Studies in Modern Responses to Gerard Manley Hopkins*, International Hopkins Association Monograph Series, 3 (Hamilton: IHA, 1985)

--- , *William Carlos Williams: A New World Naked* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981)

--- , *William Carlos Williams: The Poet and his Critics* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1975)

Pound, Ezra, '*The Tempers*', *New Freewoman*, 1 (1913), 227

Rogers, Audrey T., *Virgin and Whore: The Image of Women in the Poetry of William Carlos Williams* (Jefferson: McFarland, 1987)

Saunier-Ollier, Jacqueline, *William Carlos Williams. L'Homme et l'œuvre poétique* (Nice: Les belles lettres, 1979)

Tomlinson, Charles, ed., *William Carlos Williams: A Critical Anthology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972)

Townley, Rod, *The Early Poetry of William Carlos Williams* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975)

Wagner, Linda Welshimer, ed., *Interviews with William Carlos Williams: "Speaking Straight Ahead"* (New York: New Directions, 1976)

Weaver, Mike, *William Carlos Williams: The American Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971)

Whitaker, Thomas R., *William Carlos Williams* (New York: Twayne, 1968)

7 ALLEN GINSBERG

A) WORKS

--- , *Allen Verbatim: Lectures on Poetry, Politics, Consciousness*, ed. by Gordon Ball (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974)

--- , *Collected Poems 1947-1985* (London: Penguin, 1995)

--- , *Composed on the Tongue: Literary Conversations, 1967-1977*, (San Francisco: Grey Fox Press, n.d., 3rd printing 1994)

--- , *Cosmopolitan Greetings: Poems 1986-1992* (New York: HarperCollins; London: Penguin, 1994)

--- , *Howl: Original Draft Facsimile, Transcript & Variant Versions, Fully Annotated by Author, with Contemporaneous Correspondence, Account of First Public Reading, Legal Skirmishes, Precursor Texts & Bibliography*, ed. by Barry Miles (New York: Harper & Row, 1986; Harmondsworth: Viking, 1987)

--- , *Selected Poems 1947-1995* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996; London: Penguin, 1997)

B) SECONDARY MATERIAL

Clark, Tom, *The Great Naropa Poetry Wars* (Santa Barbara: Cadmus, 1980)

Docherty, Brian, 'Allen Ginsberg', in *American Poetry: The Modernist Ideal*, ed. by Clive Bloom and Brian Docherty (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 199-217

Haines, John, 'Poetry Chronicle', *Hudson Review*, 48 (1996), 663-71

Horovitz, Michael, 'Pinch'd and Spooned', *Poetry Review*, 85.1 (Spring 1995), 82-4

Hyde, Lewis, ed., *On the Poetry of Allen Ginsberg*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984)

Morgan, Bill, ed., *The Response to Allen Ginsberg 1926-1994: A Bibliography of Secondary Sources* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996)

Perloff, Marjorie, 'A Lion In Our Living Room: Reading Allen Ginsberg in the Eighties', in *Poetic License: Essays on Modernist and Postmodernist Lyric* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1990), pp. 199-230

Portugués, Paul, 'Allen Ginsberg's Visions and the Growth of his Poetics of Prophecy', in *Poetic Prophecy in Western Literature*, ed. by Jan Wojcik and Raymond-Jean Frontain (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson, 1984), pp. 157-73

Sail, Lawrence, 'Recent Poetry', *Stand* 36.4 (Autumn 1995), 77-83

Shumacher, Michael, *Dharma Lion: A Critical Biography of Allen Ginsberg* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992)

Wilson, Robert Anton, 'The Poet as Radar System', in Hyde, pp. 96-100

8 JACK KEROUAC

A) WORKS

Kerouac, Jack, *Heaven & Other Poems,* ed. by Donald Allen (Bolinas: Grey Fox Press, 1977)

--- , *Mexico City Blues* (New York: Grove, 1959; repr. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990)

--- , *Selected Letters, 1940-1956*, ed. by Ann Charters (New York: Viking, 1995)

B) SECONDARY MATERIAL

Anctil, Pierre, and others, eds, *Un Homme grand: Jack Kerouac at the Crossroads of Many Cultures* (Ottawa: Carelton University Press, 1990)

'Andrei Voznesensky and Allen Ginsberg: A Conversation', in Plimpton, pp. 157-80

Anstee, Rod, *Jack Kerouac: The Bootleg Era* (Sudbury, MA: Water Row Press, 1994)

Berrigan, Ted, 'An Interview with Jack Kerouac', in Plimpton, pp. 97-133

Charters, Ann, *A Bibliography of Works by Jack Kerouac (Jean Louis Lebris De Kerouac), 1939-1967* (New York: The Phoenix Book Shop, 1967)

Charters, Ann, *Kerouac: A Biography* (London: André Deutsch, 1974; first publ. San Francisco: Straight Arrow, 1973)

Clark, Tom, *Jack Kerouac: A Biography* (New York: Harcourt, 1984; repr. London: Plexus, 1997)

Creeley, Robert, 'Ways of Looking', *Poetry*, 98 (1961), 192-98

French, Warren, *Jack Kerouac* (Boston: Twayne, 1986)

Ginsberg, Allen, 'Kerouac', in *Allen Verbatim: Lectures on Poetry, Politics, Consciousness*, ed. by Gordon Ball (New York: McGraw Hill, 1974), pp. 151-60

Hecht, Anthony, 'The Anguish of the Spirit and the Letter', *Hudson Review*, 12 (1959-60), 593-603

Jones, James T., *A Map of Mexico City Blues: Jack Kerouac as Poet* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992)

Maiorana, Salvatore, *Un Sogno americano: dal jazz alla poesia Beat* (Palermo: Sintesi, 1980)

Milewski, Robert, *Jack Kerouac: An Annotated Bibliography of Secondary Sources, 1944-1979* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1981)

Nicosia, Gerald, *Memory Babe: A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac* (New York: Grove Press, 1983)

Plimpton, George, ed., *Beat Writers At Work: The Paris Review* (New York: Modern Library, 1999)

Rexroth, Kenneth, 'Discordant and Cool', *New York Times Book Review*, 29 November 1959, p. 14

White, Michael, ed., *Safe in Heaven Dead: Interviews with Jack Kerouac* (Madras: Hanuman Books, 1990)

9 OTHER POETS CITED

Allott, Miriam, ed., *Matthew Arnold* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)

Creeley, Robert, *The Collected Poems of Robert Creeley, 1945-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982)

Duncan, Robert, *Ground Work: Before the War* (New York: New Directions, 1984)

D[oolittle], H[ilda], *Collected Poems, 1912-1944*, ed. by Louis L. Martz (New York: New Directions, 1983)

Hill, Geoffrey, *The Triumph of Love* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998)

Lawrence, D.H., *The Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. by Vivian de Sola Pinto and F. Warren Roberts, rev. edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977)

Lindsay, Vachel, *Selected Poems*, ed. by Hazelton Spencer (New York: Macmillan, 1931)

Lowell, Robert, *Notebook*, 3rd edn (New York: The Noonday Press, 1971)

Pound, Ezra, *Personae: Collected Shorter Poems of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952)

--- , *The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, 4th edn (London: Faber and Faber, 1987)

Roethke, Theodore, *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968)

Rukeyser, Muriel, *The Collected Poems of Muriel Rukeyser* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978)

Swenson, May, *New and Selected Things Taking Place* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978)

Williams, Jonathan, *The Loco Logodaedalist In Situ: Selected Poems 1968-70* (London: Cape Goliard, 1971)

10 PRINTED MUSIC

Armstrong, Louis, and Zilner Trenton Randolph, 'Ol' Man Mose' (New York: Santly Bros.-Joy, 1936)

11 RECORDINGS

Armstrong, Louis. Louis Armstrong. Rhythm Saved the World: The Original Decca Recordings. MCA GRP 16022. 1991

Creeley, Robert. Sound Seminar. Recorded New York, October 24, 1966. NSA 1CA 0012614

Duncan, Robert. Robert Duncan, Introduced by John Ashbery, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum 4/15/69. Cassette. Academy of American Poets, [n.cat.], [n.d.]

Ginsberg, Allen. Jack Kerouac: Mexico City Blues. 2 cassettes. Shambala Lion Editions SLE29. 1996

Kerouac, Jack, and Steve Allen. Poetry for the Beat Generation. LP. Hanover 5000. 1959. Reissued in 1990 as part of The Kerouac Collection set of 3 CDs. Rhino Records R2 70939

Rukeyser, Muriel. The Poetry and Voice of Muriel Rukeyser. Cassette. Caedmon CDL5 1536. 1977

Swenson, May. The Poetry and Voice of May Swenson. Cassette. Caedmon CDL5 1500. 1976

Williams, William Carlos. The Complete Recordings. 20 cassettes. Keele University. 1992